







THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
CHARLES XII.  
KING OF SWEDEN.

*By M. DE VOLTAIRE.*

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,  
ANECDOTES OF PETER THE GREAT,  
&c. &c.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH  
*By JOHN JOSEPH STOCKDALE.*

DEDICATED TO THE MOST NOBLE  
THE MARQUIS WELLESLEY,  
*Late Governor General of India.*

LONDON:  
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1807.





TO THE MOST NOBLE THE  
MARQUIS WELLESLEY, K. P. K. C.  
LATE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF INDIA,  
*&c. &c. &c.*  
THE HERO OF THE EAST,

WHOSE mental energies, disclosed particularly in his late administration over the eastern empire, have been proved equal to conceive and execute the most comprehensive and magnificent plans of conquest and who by the soundest and mildest, yet most prudent and cautious policy, took those measures which, duly carried into effect, must have permanently secured the immense advantages, derived by his Lordship's abilities to his country: thus in all his acts displaying such a combination and variety of talents as is perhaps without a parallel in history and proving himself equal as a warrior and a states-

## DEDICATION.

man—this edition of the history of the celebrated “Hero of the North,” is dedicated by his Lordship’s most ardent admirer, though unknown, and indeed very humble servant,

THE TRANSLATOR.

London, No. 41. Pall Mall,  
24th March, 1807.

## INTRODUCTION.

No apology will, I should suppose, be thought necessary for bringing out a new edition of the following universally admired history, except that the many former have been some time out of print.

As in my accidental reperusal of the best edition of the celebrated original, I observed many material additions and alterations, I conceived that a new translation performed with accuracy from such materials, must be acceptable at any time, but more particularly at a crisis when the necessity of individual heroism seems daily to increase. The portrait of the northern hero prefixed to this, was drawn by stealth, by a soldier of his own army and from that sketch, the full length picture was painted for Louis XIV. It is the most accurate likeness of Charles XII. extant.

Charles the Twelfth was tall, handsome and well made, but immoderately dirty and slovenly in his person, clownish in his deportment and far from fascinating in his manners.

His residence, establishment and dress, were much inferior to those of a middling English farmer, whose fare very much exceeds what used to be the allowance of that great monarch. At his dinner, he generally seated himself, without ceremony, upon either a chair or stool, whichever first came in his way and having tucked a napkin under his chin, began with a thick piece of bread and butter, which he ate with his meat and always drank small beer. Within a quarter of an hour he rose from the table, at which his life guards instantly took their seats to the same victuals. His bed-chamber was small and dirty, the walls bare, without furniture and his bed having neither sheets nor canopy. He laid upon a quilt which turned over and was his only covering. His writing table was a piece of deal, supported by a stick and his standish an almost shapeless piece of wood, with a sand box of the same. By the side of his bed was a fine gilt bible, which

was the only article of external splendor in his household. His countenance was never stern, yet was he so positive and whimsical, that he was rather feared than beloved. Such was the singular character of this extraordinary warlike genius.

I shall conclude with Voltaire's remarks on history in general :

“ In my opinion the method of rendering history useful is, to point out the good and ill which kings have done to mankind. I for example, think, that if Charles XII. after having conquered Denmark, beaten the Moscovites, dethroned his enemy Augustus, strengthened the new king of Poland and granted the czar the peace he demanded, had returned home the conqueror and pacificator of the north and had applied himself to making the arts and commerce flourish, he would then have been a truly great man, instead of which he was but a great warrior and at last overcome by a prince whom he held in no estimation. It were desirable for the welfare of the community, that Peter the Great had been sometimes less cruel and Charles XII. less opiniated.

I, infinitely, prefer to either a prince who re-

gards humanity as the first of virtues, who only prepares for war from necessity, who loves peace because he loves mankind, who encourages all the arts and who wishes to be, in short, a sage upon the throne. Such is my hero, nor think that he is a being of the imagination, the hero now lives in the person of" our own beloved sovereign, George III. whom may the Almighty bless and long preserve.

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# ANÉCDOTES

## OF THE

### CZAR PETER THE GREAT.

**PETER** the First, of Russia, was surnamed the Great, because he not only engaged in but performed, the most illustrious actions, none of which had suggested themselves to the minds of his predecessors. His people, until he came amongst them, had confined themselves to those first arts, the children of necessity. Custom has such a powerful influence over mankind, which is so little inquisitive after that knowledge not almost intuitively acquired; genius unfolds itself with so much difficulty, and is so apt to give way before impediments, that there is every reason to suppose that all nations might have remained in a state of uncivilization, until such men as the czar Peter were ordained to appear.

A young Genevese, Le Fort by name, happened to be at Moscow, on a visit to the Danish ambassador, about the year 1695. The czar was at this time nine years of age, and he fell into company with the Genevese, who had in a very short time acquired the Russian language, and conversed fluently in almost every other language in Europe. Le Fort found great favour with the prince, entered into his service, and soon afterwards became his constant companion. He ere long intimated to the prince that there was another and preferable manner of reigning than the one unfortunately hitherto pursued throughout his vast empire, and perhaps to this circumstance it may be attributed, that Russia has, even at this period, emerged from its state of barbarism.

That mind must have been by nature great, which could at the same instant give ear to a foreigner, and lay aside every prejudice regal and local. The czar felt that to him it was given to found, or rather to form, a nation and an empire ; but he looked round him and saw that he stood alone and without support. Then he conceived the

design of quitting his states, and like another Prometheus, stealing celestial fire, whereby to give animation to the rest of his countrymen. This heavenly flame he went to seek among the Dutch, who, three centuries before, were scarcely more possessed of it than the Moscovites themselves. A check was, however, for a time put to his designs. He had to support a war against the Turks, or more properly speaking the Tartars, in 1696, and it was not until these were subdued, that he took his leave of his states for the purpose of informing himself in those arts which were absolutely unknown to Russia. The sovereign of the most extensive empire upon earth took up his residence for nearly two years at Amsterdam, and in the village of Sardam, under the name of Peter Michaelow. He was commonly addressed as M. Peter Bas. He incorporated himself with the carpenters of the village whence a great part of Europe was supplied with shipping. He handled the hatchet and compasses, and when he had sufficiently studied ship-building, turned his attention to geography,

geometry, and history. At first he attracted crowds of people about him, and he sometimes got rid of their importunities with little ceremony. The first language he made himself master of was the Dutch, and he then applied to the German, which sounded soft and pleasant to his ear, and which he therefore intended to introduce at his court. He likewise obtained a little knowledge of English in his travels to London; but French, which afterwards as the country advanced in civilization under the empress Elizabeth, became the language in general use at Petersburg, he never knew.

His stature was tall, and his countenance haughty and majestic, but sometimes disfigured by convulsive catches, which gave it an entirely different appearance. These convulsions were attributed to the effects of poison, said to have been administered to him by his sister Sophia. But the real poison was wine and brandy, which he frequently drank to excess, trusting too much to a robust constitution.

He conversed equally with the artisan or the general; neither was it after the manner of a

barbarian who sees no distinction of men ; nor like a popular prince who aims at pleasing every body ; but as a man desirous of obtaining information. The love of women was as strong in him as was their dislike in his rival the king of Sweden ; and in love as at table, one was the same to him as another. He piqued himself on the quantity not the quality of the wines which he swallowed.

Legislators and kings, it is generally said, should never put themselves into a passion, but never was there a man more subject to this failing than Peter the Great. It is a defect in a king not to be repaired by the mere avowal of the fault, which he on one occasion admitted to a Dutch magistrate, on his second journey, saying, I have reformed my nation, but cannot effect a reformation in myself. True it is that the cruelties for which he is reproached, were customary at the court of Moscow, and so were they at Morocco. It was no uncommon thing to see a czar apply a hundred strokes of the knout with his royal hands, to the bare shoulders of a first officer of the crown, or a lady of his court, for



neglect of duty, in consequence of drunkenness, or try his sabre upon the neck of a criminal. Peter had gone through some of these ceremonies, though Le Fort sometimes had sufficient influence over him to arrest his arm when raised to strike; but he was not always at his side.

His journey to Holland, and particularly a taste for the arts, somewhat softened his manners, for the arts have the power of rendering mankind more tractable. He frequently breakfasted with a geographer, under whose care he constructed sea-charts; and passed whole days with the celebrated Ruysch, who first discovered that art which has brought anatomy to perfection, and taken away the disgusting part of it.

At twenty-two years old the prince gave himself that kind of education which a Dutch artisan would give a son, in whom he discovered some traits of genius, and even this description of education was far above what had ever before been bestowed upon the throne of Russia. At the same time he sent young Moscovites to travel and acquire information in every European state. These first attempts, however, were

far from successful. His new disciples did not imitate their master. Indeed one of them who was sent to Venice, never quitted his room, that he might not have to reproach himself with having seen any other country than his own. This dread of other countries had been inspired by certain Moscovite priests, who pretended that it was an horrible crime in a Christian to travel, because the inhabitants of Palestine were forbidden by the Old Testament to assume the manners of their richer and more dexterous neighbours.

In 1698, he went from Amsterdam to England, no longer in the disguise of a ship carpenter, neither as a sovereign prince, but as a Russian boyard, travelling for information. He left nothing unseen, not even the theatre, though he could not understand a word of the performance.

King William had prepared a house for his reception, which was a great thing at London ; palaces are not common in that immense city, where scarcely any, but low houses, without court-yards or gardens, and little doors similar to our shops, were seen. It was still too fine for

the czar, who preferred taking up his residence amongst the sailors, where he was more likely to perfect himself in seafaring knowledge. He not unfrequently assumed the disguise of a seaman, with the view of engaging persons of that description to enter his service.

While he was in London, he formed the project of a communication between the rivers Wolga and Tanais; and also, by means of a canal, of effecting their junction with the Dwina, and thus connect the ocean, Black and Caspian seas. Some Englishmen whom he took with him did not serve him adequately in this great plan, and the Turks who wrested Azoph from him in 1712, threw still stronger obstacles in the way of his vast undertaking.

In London being in want of money, some merchants made him an offer of 25,000*l.* for permission to carry tobacco to Russia; a great innovation in that country, the very religion of which was against it. The patriarch had issued an edict excommunicating any person who should smoke tobacco, because it was a custom with their enemies the Turks; and the clergy considered it as

one of their first privileges, that they could prevent the Russian nation from smoking. The czar took the money, and pledged himself to make the very clergy smoke. Many other changes were in contemplation.

To such travellers it is usual for kings to make presents. That of William to the czar was worthy of them both. It was a yacht of 25 guns, the best sailer in the service, amply provisioned, and the whole ship's company of which also volunteered to accompany her. Peter, on board this yacht which he piloted in person, returned to Holland to revisit his carpenters; and thence he proceeded, about the middle of 1698, to Vienna, where he proposed making a shorter stay than in London, because at the court of the grave Leopold there were more ceremonies to go through, and less information to be acquired.

After having visited Vienna, it was his intention to go from thence to Venice, and afterwards to Rome; but he was obliged to hasten his return to Moscow upon the news of a civil war, caused by his absence, and the permission to smoke. The *strelits*, an antient soldiery

of the czars, similar to the janizaries, equally turbulent and undisciplined, and less courageous, were excited to revolt by some abbés and monks, partly Greeks and partly Russians, who represented how much God was irritated at the use of tobacco in Moscow, and threw the state into confusion for so important a subject of dispute. Peter who had foreseen what the monks and strelits might do, had taken measures accordingly.

He had a well disciplined army composed almost entirely of foreigners, well paid, and all smokers, commanded by general Gordon, who had a thorough knowledge of war, and no partiality for monks. Here it was that the sultan Osman had failed: he, like Peter, wanted to reform the janizaries, but having no force to oppose them, failed in his attempt, and was strangled by them.

His armies were now placed on the footing of other European princes, and his ships were built by English and Dutch artificers, at Veronitz on the Tanais, twelve hundred miles from Moscow. He embellished and saw to the defence of the

cities ; made high roads of fifteen hundred miles long, and established manufactures of every sort. The first factory set up, an unanswerable proof of the profound ignorance of the people, was for pins. Velvets, and gold and silver cloths are now made at Moscow.

The war which he waged against Charles XII. for the recovery of those provinces which the Swedes had formerly wrested from Russia, did not prevent him, unfortunate as it was at its outset, going on with his reform in church and state. At the end of 1699, he ordered that the year should commence in January instead of September. The Russians, who believed that God had created the world in September, were astonished that their czar was so powerful as to change the works of God. The reformation began in 1700, with a great jubilee, appointed by the czar himself.

He had suppressed the dignity of partriarch, and executed its functions himself. It is not true that his patriarch was sent into the privies of Moscow ; but when inclined to be merry in his punishments, he said to the person in fault, I

make thee fool ; and he on whom this flattering title was conferred, however great his rank, was compelled to wear a jacket, cap and bells, and divert the court in quality of buffoon to his czarish majesty. He did not so degrade the patriarch, but contented himself with suppressing an office, which those who had been invested with had carried to that abusive excess, as to make the czar walk before them once a year, holding the bridle of the patriarch's horse, a ceremony which Peter the Great first set aside.

That he might have more subjects, he wanted fewer monks, and thenceforth forbade any one to enter a cloister unless fifty years of age, so that he soon saw of all countries which tolerated monks, he had the least in number. He further enacted very sage laws for the attendants of the church and the reformation of their manners, although his own were dissolute enough ; well aware that if a sovereign is bad, it does not follow that his clergy should be authorised to be so too.

Before he came to the crown, females always lived apart from the men, and it was unknown

for a man to have seen a girl until he had made her his wife. His first acquaintance with her was at the church. Among the nuptial presents was a large handful of rods, sent by the man to his intended spouse, to remind her that on the first occasion she might expect a little matrimonial correction. Husbands were even allowed to put their wives to death with impunity, but wives usurping the same right over their husbands were interred alive.

Peter abolished the gift of rods, interdicted husbands from killing their wives, and to render the marriage state less unhappy and better adapted, he introduced the custom of the men eating with, and making proposals to, the women before marriage. He ordered his boyards to hold assemblies at which any faults committed against Russian civility were punished by a large glass of brandy, which the offender was made to drink, so that all the honourable company retired generally very drunk and not much improved. It was notwithstanding a great point to introduce some kind of society amongst a set of people where the meeting of the two sexes was unknown. He



went so far as sometimes to give dramatic representations. The princess Natalia, one of his sisters, composed some tragedies in the Russian language. The orchestra consisted of Russian violins, which were played by striking them with the sinews of oxen. There are now in Petersburg French comedians, and Italian opera performers.

Magnificence has succeeded to barbarism. One of the most difficult of the founder's enterprises was to shorten the clothing, and shave the beards of his people, who murmured seriously at the order: saying, how is a whole nation to be taught to make German coats and handle a razor? He effected it by placing tailors and barbers at the city gates. The former cut the gowns and coats of those who entered, the latter the beards: those who resisted were fined 1*s.* 8*d.* The alternative of losing the beard soon had a preference over the loss of pence. The women materially served the czar in the reform: to him they were indebted for being subject to be whipped no more, for the enjoyment of the society of man, and for having more attractive faces to kiss.

In the midst of these great and petty innovations, which were a source of amusement to the czar, and the sanguinary war which he was carrying on against Charles XII. he laid the foundations of the important city and harbour of Petersburg, in 1704, upon a marsh where not even a hut was standing before. Peter worked with his own hands at the first house ; nothing disheartened him : workmen were forced to this part of the Baltic from the frontiers of Astracan, and from the frontiers of the Black and Caspian seas. Above a hundred thousand men perished in the course of this laborious work, from the fatigues and famine they were necessitated to undergo ; but the city at length became complete, and the ports of Archangel, Astracan, Azoph, and Veronitz, were accomplished.

To effect establishments so extensive, to maintain fleets in the Baltic sea, and 100,000 regular troops, the state then possessed a revenue scarcely exceeding a million sterling ; but the pay to the labourers was proportioned to the income of the state.

When he had created his nation, he thought

that he had full right to satisfy his own inclination, by espousing his mistress, but she was such a mistress as would do honour to a throne. The marriage took place publicly in 1712. This celebrated Catharine, an orphan, born in the village of Ringen, in Estonia, brought up on charity by a vicar, married to a Livonian soldier, and taken by a party of troops two days after her first marriage, had passed from the service of generals Barrer and Sheremetto to that of a pastry-cook's boy, Menzikow, who was made a prince and the first man of the empire; at length became the wife of Peter the Great, and after the czar's death sovereign empress, a dignity of which she proved herself worthy.

She in a great degree softened the manners of her husband; saved many backs from the knout, and more heads from the block than general Le Fort had ever done. She was beloved, revered. She had been well brought up by the charity of the priest; and was indebted to nature for extraordinary talents, and greatness of mind, though she could neither read nor write: and from managing the household affairs of Bauerd Menzikow

with ability, soon became able to regulate the most extensive empire.

The czarowitz Alexis, son of the czar, who, like him, it is said, married a slave, and secretly quitted Russia, did not meet with similar success in his two enterprises; and having imitated the father, unfortunately cost the son his life. This was one of the most terrible examples of severity ever made from a throne; but what is very honorable to the memory of the empress Catharine, she had no concern in the misfortune of a prince born of another bed, and who loved nothing that his father loved.

Catharine is not accused of having acted the part of a cruel step-mother. The great crime of the unfortunate Alexis was that of being too artful, and disapproving of what his father did, however great and essential to the glory of the nation. One day, overhearing the Moscovites complain of the insupportable hardships they were forced to endure in building Petersburg, "Make yourselves easy," said he, "the city will not be of long duration." When he was to follow his father in journeys of fifteen or sixteen hun-

dred miles, which the czar often took, the prince would feign indisposition. He was rudely purged of a malady which was not upon him. Such a quantity of medicine, combined with large doses of brandy, impaired his health and mind. He at first had some inclination to learn: he understood geometry and history; had studied the German language; but he had a strong aversion to war, and would not learn the art, which was a great reason for his father's dissatisfaction.

In 1711, he was married to the princess of Wolfenbittel, sister of the empress, wife of Charles VI. This marriage was unhappy. The princess was often left for brandy debauches, and for Afrosine, a Finland girl, large, well-made, and of very gentle manners. It was pretended that the princess died of grief, and that the czarowitz secretly espoused Afrosine, in 1713, when the empress Catharine brought him a brother.

The discontents between father and son every day became more serious, until Peter, about the year 1716, threatened to disinherit him; and the prince replied, that he would turn monk.

In 1717, the czar, from policy and curiosity,

renewed his journeys, and at length went into France. If his son had been inclined to revolt, if any party had been formed in his favour, this had been the time to declare himself; but instead of staying in Russia to make friends, he went a tour. On his part, having with great difficulty collected some thousands of ducats, which he had borrowed secretly, he threw himself into the hands of Charles VI. brother-in-law of his deceased wife, and remained some time completely incognito at Vienna, whence he went into Naples, where he staid a year, without either the czar, or any one in Russia, knowing the place of his retreat.

During the son's concealment the father was at Paris; where he was received with the same respect as at other places, but with a gallantry peculiar to that court. If he went to inspect a factory, and one work attracted more of his attention than another, he was on the morrow presented with it. He dined with the duke of Antin at Pelitbourg: the first thing which he cast his eye upon was his own portrait, at full length, in

the clothes he then had on. When he went to see the royal mint of medals, one of every sort was struck in his presence, and presented to him. At last one was struck off, and let fall purposely at his feet. He was allowed to pick it up himself, when he saw it inscribed with the words Peter the Great, and on the reverse a Fame, and the legend, *vires acquirit eundo*; an allegory equally just and flattering to a prince who was, in fact, increasing his own merit by travel.

On seeing the tomb of cardinal Richelieu, and the statue, a piece of workmanship worthy its great original, he ascended the tomb, and embracing the statue, "Great minister," said he, "why wert thou not born in my own time! I would have given thee one half of my empire to have taught me how to govern the other." A Russian less enthusiastic than the czar having desired an explanation of these words, replied, "If he had given up one half, he would not have kept the other long."

The czar, after having thus traversed France, where every thing inclines the manners to mild-

ness and indulgence, returned to his own country, and resumed his severity. He had, in fact, prevailed on his son to return from Naples to Petersburg, from whence the prince was conducted to Moscow to his father, who began by depriving him of his succession to the throne, and making him sign a solemn act of renunciation, at the end of January 1718, in consideration of which act he promised his son life.

It was not altogether improbable, that such an act might one day be annulled. The czar, to give it greater force, forgetting that he was father, and remembering only that he was founder of the empire, which his son might replunge into darkness, ordered a public trial of the unfortunate prince, on the plea of some concealment, which he was alleged to have practised in the confession required of him.

An assembly was convoked of bishops, abbés, and professors, who found in the Old Testament, that those who cursed their father and mother should be put to death ; that indeed David had pardoned his son Absalom, who had revolted against him, but that God had not pardoned him.



Such was their decision, without concluding on any thing; but it was, in fact, signing his death-warrant. Alexis had, in truth, never cursed his father; he had never revolted like Absalom; he had never lain publicly with the king's concubines; he had travelled without the paternal permission; and had written letters to his friends, expressing a hope that they would one day remember him in Russia. However, out of one hundred and twenty-four secular judges appointed to try him, not one but pronounced him deserving of death, and those who could not write, made the others sign for them. It has been rumoured in Europe, and has more than once appeared in print, that the czar had the criminal trial of don Carlos translated for him from the Spanish into Russian. He was the unfortunate prince whom Philip II. his father, immured in prison, where the heir to a great monarchy ended his days; but don Carlos never had any trial; and it was never known whether he died a natural or a violent death. Peter, a most despotic prince, had no need of examples. It is certain that his son died in his bed the morning after the sentence;

and that the czar had one of the best apothecaries in Europe at Moscow. However, it is probable that prince Alexis, heir to the largest monarchy in the world, unanimously condemned by his father's subjects, who were one day to become his own, might have died of the revolution which so strange and fatal a decree might occasion in his body.

The father went to see his expiring son ; and it is said, shed tears : but in spite of his tears, the wheels were covered with the broken limbs of his son's friends. He beheaded his own brother-in-law, count Lapuchin, brother of his wife Attokesa Lapuchin, whom he had repudiated, and uncle of prince Alexis. The prince's confessor likewise lost his head. If Russia has been civilized, it must be confessed that it has paid dear for the polish.

The sequel of the czar's life was but a continuation of his great designs, labours, and exploits, which almost effaced the excess of his, perhaps, inevitable severity. He often harangued his court and councils. In one of his harangues, he

said that he had sacrificed his son for the good of his states.

After the glorious peace which was at length concluded with Sweden, in 1721, whereby Livonia, Estonia, Ingermania, half of Carelia and Wibourg, were ceded to him, the Russian states decreed him the name of Great, father of his country, and emperor.

E S S A Y  
ON THE  
HISTORY OF CHARLES XII.

**F**EW are the princes whose conduct merits a particular history. In vain have most of them been the objects of slander or flattery; small is their number whose memory is preserved, and still more inconsiderable would it be, were the good only remembered.

Those princes whose actions have benefited mankind, are most entitled to immortality. The affection of Louis the Twelfth for his people will be had in remembrance so long as France endures. The many failings of Francis I. will be obliterated, on account of the arts and sciences of which he was the father. Blest will be the memory of Henry IV. who first conquered his kingdom by valour, and then retained it by clemency. The generosity of Louis XIV. in protect-

ing those arts which took their rise from Francis I. will be ever applauded.

An opposite reason preserves the memory of bad princes, like that of fires, plagues, and inundations.

Conquerors are a species between good kings and tyrants, but partake most of the latter, and have a dazzling reputation. We are eager to know the most minute circumstances of their lives. Such is the miserable weakness of mankind, that they look with admiration upon persons glorious for mischief, and are better pleased in talking of the destroyer than of the founder of an empire.

As for those princes who have made no figure either in peace or war, who have neither been remarkable for great virtues, nor vices; their lives furnish so little matter for imitation or instruction, that they are not worthy of notice. Of so many emperors of Rome, Greece, Germany and Moscovy; of so many sultans, caliphs, popes, and kings, how few are there whose names deserve to be placed upon record, except in chro-

nological tables, where they are of no other use but to mark the epochs.

There is a vulgarity among princes as well as among the rest of mankind ; yet such is the mania of writing, that a prince is no sooner dead, than the world is deluged with volumes of memoirs and lives of him, and anecdotes of his court. By these means books have been so multiplied, that were a man to live an hundred years, and employ them entirely in reading, he would not be able to run over all that have been published in Europe relating to history alone for the two last centuries.

This desire of transmitting useless details to posterity, and fixing the attention of future ages upon common events, is owing to the weakness of those who have lived in some court, and have had the misfortune to have taken part in public affairs. They think the court at which they resided the finest; their king the greatest, and the affairs they have been concerned in the most important that ever occurred ; and they imagine that posterity will behold them in the same light.

If a prince has had wars abroad, troubles or intrigues at home ; if he buys the friendship of his

neighbours, or they purchase his ; if after some victories or defeats he makes peace, his subjects are so dazzled with the glare of these events, that they look upon their own as the most remarkable age since the creation. And what then ? This prince dies ; new measures are taken ; the intrigues of his court, his mistresses, ministers, generals, wars, nay even he himself, sinks into oblivion.

Ever since Christian princes have been endeavouring to over-reach one another, sometimes making peace, sometimes war, thousands of treaties have been signed, and, at least, as many battles fought ; and glorious and infamous actions have been beyond number. When this multitude of transactions is submitted to posterity, they are nearly all destroyed by each other, and the memory alone survives of those which have occasioned great revolutions, or which, having been narrated by authors of eminence, are rescued from the mass, like portraits of obscure personages, painted by masterly hands.

A particular History of Charles the Twelfth of Sweden would not have swelled this grievous catalogue, were it not, that he and his rival, Peter

Alexiowitz, who was a much greater man, are universally allowed to be the most extraordinary persons that have been known for many ages. Yet was not the mere satisfaction of becoming the historian of extraordinary facts the motive for undertaking this history; but the consideration of the benefit princes might derive from their perusal, should this book ever fall into their hands.

Is not the story of Charles the Twelfth enough to cure any king of the vanity of being a conqueror? Where is the prince who can say, I have greater courage, more virtues, more resolution, more strength of body, greater skill in war, or better troops than Charles the Twelfth? If with a combination of all these favourable circumstances, and after so many victories, he was ultimately so unfortunate, what may be expected by other princes, who have as much ambition, with less talents and resources?

This History has been composed from the accounts of distinguished characters, who spent many years with Charles the Twelfth, and Peter the Great, emperor of Moscovy; and who, hav-



ing long after the death of those princes, retired into a free country, can have no interest in disguising the truth.

Nothing has been advanced but upon the unquestionable testimony of eye-witnesses, which makes this history very different from those publications which have appeared under a nearly similar title.

Many skirmishes between the Moscovite and Swedish officers are passed over; for it is the life of the king of Sweden, not of his officers, that is here designed; and indeed of his life the most important events alone have been selected. The history of a prince is not to enumerate all his actions, but those only which deserve to be transmitted to posterity.

It is proper to remark, that many things which were true in 1728, the time when this history was written, are not so at present, 1739. For instance, the trade of Sweden is less neglected; the Polish infantry has regimentals, and is better disciplined. In reading history, we must always recur to the time in which the author wrote. Were we to read no French memoirs but those of

the cardinal de Retz, one would really take his nation for a set of enthusiasts, breathing nothing but faction, madness, and civil war. To read the history of the golden age of Louis XIV. we should judge them a people born only for obedience, conquest, and the polite arts; and another perusing memoirs of the first years of Louis XV. would conclude, that the French were entirely devoted to luxury and avarice, and perfectly indifferent to every thing besides.

The Spaniards of the present day bear no resemblance to those of Charles V. and yet in a few years they may be so again. The English of this age are no more like the fanatics in Cromwell's time, than the monks and monsignori, who fill the streets of Rome, are like the Scipios of old. I doubt whether the Swedish troops would now be so formidable as those of Charles XII. We say that a man behaved well on such an occasion; and we may say the same of a nation.

If any prince or minister should in this work stumble upon disagreeable truths, let them con-

sider, that being public men, the public has a claim to an account of their actions. Such is the price of their greatness. History is to record, not to flatter; and the only way to compel mankind to speak well of us is to do what is right.

THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
CHARLES XII.  
KING OF SWEDEN.

BOOK I.

*History of Sweden to the Time of Charles XII.  
His Education and Enemies. Character of the  
Czar Peter Alexiowitz. Curious Particulars of  
the Czar and the Russian Nation. Moscovy,  
Poland, and Denmark unite against Charles.*

SWEDEN and Finland make a kingdom about six hundred miles broad, and nine hundred long, extending from south to north, from the 55th to the 70th degree of latitude, in a very severe climate, where the seasons of spring or autumn are scarcely known. Winter prevails

there nine months in the year ; the heat of summer is immediately succeeded by intense cold ; and the frosts are renewed from the month of October, without any of those insensible gradations perceptible in other countries, and which render the transition less severe. But nature in return has compensated the rude climate by a serene sky and a pure air. The almost constant heat of the summer produces flowers and fruits in a very short time ; the long winter nights are tempered by the evening and morning twilights, which endure in proportion to the sun's distance from Sweden : and the light of the moon, not obscured by any cloud, but rather increased by the reflection of the snow, which covers the ground ; and very often by lights similar to the *Aurora Borealis*, make it as commodious to travel in Sweden by night as by day. Their cattle are smaller than in the southern parts of Europe, for want of pasturage ; but the men are larger. The purity of the atmosphere gives them health, and the rigour of the climate strength ; they even live to a great age, if not enfeebled by the immoderate use of wines and strong liquors, which

the northern nations seem to be the more fond of, as nature has denied them.

The Swedes are well made, strong and active, capable of sustaining the severest labours, hunger, and misery ; they are warriors from their infancy, high-spirited, with more courage than industry, having long neglected, and at present making slow advances in their improvements of commerce, which alone can supply them with what their climate refuses. It was principally from Sweden, one part of which is yet called Gothland, that issued the swarm of Goths, which overspread the face of Europe, and wrested it from the Roman empire, which for the space of five hundred years had tyrannically usurped its dominion and legislation.

The northern nations at that time were far more populous than they are at present ; as their religion, by admitting a plurality of wives, gave the inhabitants an opportunity of furnishing the state with more subjects ; and as the women themselves knew no reproach but that of barrenness and idleness, and were as laborious and strong as the men, they bore children earlier and longer.

But Sweden, with what it still has of Finland, does not contain more than four millions of inhabitants. Its soil is poor and barren : Scania is the only province which grows wheat. There is not more than 375,000*l.* of coin in the whole country. The public bank, which is the oldest in Europe, was introduced by necessity, because payments being made in copper and iron money, its remittance was too difficult.

Sweden was always free until the middle of the fourteenth century. In that long space of time the government underwent several revolutions, but they were always in favour of liberty. Their chief magistrate had the name of king, a title which in different countries is attended with very different powers. In France and Spain it denotes absolute authority, and in Poland, Sweden and England, limited sway. This king could do nothing without the senate, and the senate depended upon the states general, which were often called together. The representatives of the nation in these great assemblies were the gentry, bishops, and deputies of towns, and in process of time, the very peasants, a class of people, in other

places unjustly despised, and enslaved throughout almost the whole of the north, were admitted.

About the year 1492, this nation so jealous of its liberties, and which yet prides itself for having subjugated Rome thirteen hundred years ago, was brought into subjection by a woman, and a people less powerful than the Swedes.

Margaret of Valdemar, the Semiramis of the north, queen of Denmark and Norway, conquered Sweden by force and stratagem, and united those three large dominions into one kingdom. After her decease, Sweden rent by civil wars, alternately shook off and submitted to the Danish yoke ; was now governed by kings, and now by administrators. About the year 1520, it was beyond measure oppressed by two tyrants at the same time. The one was Christiern the Second, king of Denmark, a monster made up of vices, without the least intermixture of virtue ; the other was an archbishop of Upsal, primate of the kingdom, and as cruel as Christiern. These two by a concerted plan, one day seized upon the consuls, magistrates of Stockholm, and ninety-four senators, and caused them to be put to death



by the common executioner, on pretence that they had been excommunicated by the pope for having defended the rights of the state against the archbishop.

Whilst these two men combined to oppress, and disagreeing only in dividing the spoil, were employed in the most tyrannical exercise of arbitrary power, and the utmost cruelties of revenge, a new event changed the face of affairs in the north.

Gustavus Vasa, a young man descended from the antient race of the kings of that country, arose from the forests of Dalecarlia, where he laid concealed, and so took upon him the deliverance of Sweden. He was one of those great geniuses, whom nature so rarely forms, with all the qualifications necessary to govern mankind. His prepossessing shape and majestic air gained him followers from the moment he appeared. His eloquence which received additional weight from his suavity of manner, was the more persuasive as it was entirely artless. His enterprising genius formed such designs as to the vulgar appear rash, and are brave only in the eyes of great men, and

his indefatigable courage constantly crowned them with success. He was intrepid with prudence, gentle in an age of cruelty, and it is said as virtuous as the head of a party can be.

Gustavus Vasa, an hostage of Christiern, had been detained prisoner against the law of nations. Upon his escape he wandered about the mountains and woods of Dalecarlia, disguised like a peasant, and was even reduced to the necessity of working in the copper mines for his support, and better concealment. But buried as he was under ground, he dared to entertain thoughts of dethroning the tyrant. He discovered himself to the peasants, and appeared to them a person of a superior nature, to whom the common sort of men are naturally inclined to submit. In a little time he converted those savages into well disciplined troops, with which he gave battle to Christiern and the archbishop, gained several victories, drove them both out of Sweden, and was at length justly chosen by the states king of that country, which his efforts had emancipated.

Scarcely was he settled upon the throne, before he entered upon an enterprise of greater difficulty

than his conquests. The real tyrants of the state were the bishops, who being in possession of almost all the riches in Sweden, employed them in oppressing the subjects, and in hostility to their kings. This power was the more formidable as the ignorance of the people had made it sacred. He punished the Romish religion for the crimes of its ministers, and, in less than two years, more by the superiority of his policy, than by his authority, introduced Lutheranism into Sweden. Having thus wrested the kingdom, as he said, from the Danes and the clergy, he reigned happily and absolutely till he was seventy years of age, when he died full of glory, and left his family and religion in possession of the throne. †

One of his descendants was that Gustavus Adolphus, called the Great. He conquered Ingria, Livonia, Bremen, Verden, Wismar, and Pomerania, without reckoning above an hundred places in Germany, which were ceded to Sweden after his death. He shook the throne of Ferdinand II. to its foundations, and protected the Lutherans in Germany; where he was privately assisted by the intrigues of Rome itself, which stood far more in

awe of the power of the emperor, than of heresy. He it was who by his victories effectually contributed to the depression of the house of Austria. though the glory of that transaction was given to Cardinal Richlieu, who knew well how to procure himself the reputation, whilst Gustavus was satisfied with performing acts, of greatness. He was upon the point of pushing his arms beyond the Danube, and perhaps dethroning the emperor, when he was killed in his thirty-seventh year, at the battle of Lutzen, which he gained over Walstein, carrying with him to the grave the name of great, the lamentations of the north, and the esteem of his enemies.

His daughter Christina, a lady of extraordinary genius, chose rather to converse with men of learning, than to reign over a people, whose knowledge was confined to war. She became as illustrious for quitting the throne, as her ancestors had been for conquering or securing it. The protestants have attacked her as if no person could be possessed of great virtues without adhering to Luther; and the papists have triumphed too much in the conversion of a woman, who was

merely a philosopher. She retired to Rome, where she passed the remainder of her days amidst the sciences she loved, and for which she had renounced an empire at twenty-seven years of age.

Before her abdication she prevailed on the Swedish states to elect her cousin Charles Gustavus X. son to the count Palatine, duke of Deux Ponts, her successor. This prince added new conquests to those of Gustavus Adolphus ; he first carried his arms into Poland, where he was victorious in the celebrated battle of Warsaw, which lasted three days. He was long engaged in a successful war against the Danes ; besieged their capital, united Schonen to Sweden, and secured at least for a time, the duke of Holstein in the possession of Sleswick. At last having experienced some reverses, and made peace with his enemies, his ambition turned against his subjects. He conceived the design of establishing an arbitrary power in Sweden, but was cut off in the thirty-seventh year of his age, like the great Gustavus, without completing his project, which his son Charles XI. was so happy as to accomplish.

Charles XI. was a soldier like his ancestors, but

more absolute than either of them. He abolished the authority of the senate, which was declared to be the senate of the king, and not of the kingdom. He was frugal, vigilant, and indefatigable ; qualifications which would have endeared him to all, if his tyranny had not excited the dread, rather than gained him the affection of his subjects.

In 1680, he married Ulrica Eleonora, daughter of Frederick III. king of Denmark, a princess distinguished by her virtue, and worthy of greater confidence than her husband reposed in her. Of this marriage on the 27th of June 1682, was born Charles XII. a man the most extraordinary perhaps, that ever appeared in the world. All the great qualities of his ancestors were united in him ; nor had he any other fault or misfortune, but that he carried them beyond all bounds. Of him it is now proposed to narrate the facts which have been collected concerning his person and his actions.

The first book put into his hands was Samuel Puffendorf's work, that he might have an early knowledge of his own and the neighbouring dominions. He soon learnt the German language,

which he spoke ever afterwards, as well as his mother tongue. At seven years old, he was a perfect horseman. Violent exercises which were his sole delight, and disclosed his warlike inclinations, laid the foundations of a vigorous constitution, capable of supporting the fatigues whereto his natural disposition inclined him.

Though in his infancy good natured, he was invincibly obstinate ; the only way to move him was to touch his honour ; if the word glory was but mentioned he would do any thing in the world ; he had a great aversion to Latin ; but when he was told that the kings of Poland and Denmark understood it, he learnt it fast enough, and retained it so far, as to be able to speak it the rest of his life. The same means were taken to induce him to learn French ; but he peremptorily refused to make use of it as long as he lived, even with French ambassadors, who understood no other language.

As soon as he had acquired sufficient knowledge of the Latin, Quintus Curtius was given him to translate ; and he took a fancy for the book, which the subject rather than the style in-

spired him with. The person who explained this author to him, having asked him what he thought of Alexander, I think, said the prince, that I should like to resemble him ; but replied the other, he lived only thirty-two years. Ah ! rejoined he, is not that enough, when he has conquered kingdoms ? These answers were not failed to be carried to the king his father, who exclaimed, this child will far outdo me, and even go beyond the great Gustavus. One day he was amusing himself in the king's apartment with looking at two plans, the one a town of Hungary, taken by the Turks from the emperor, and the other Riga, capital of Livonia, a province conquered by the Swedes a century before. Under the plan of the Hungarian town were these words taken from the book of Job, The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord. The young prince, upon reading this, instantly took a pencil, and wrote under the plan of Riga, The Lord gave, and the Devil shall not take it from me. Thus in the most indifferent actions of his childhood, he would often let fall some little traces of his resolute dis-



position, the characteristics of a great mind, which discovered what he would one day be.

At eleven years old, he lost his mother. She died on the 5th of August, 1693, of a distemper arising from the uneasiness occasioned by her husband's conduct, and her own endeavours to conceal it. Charles XI. had stripped a great number of his subjects of their wealth, by means of a certain judicial court, called the house of liquidations, established by his sole authority. A multitude of citizens, nobility, merchants, farmers, widows and orphans, ruined by that court, filled the streets of Stockholm, and daily uttered their fruitless complaints at the gate of the palace. The queen succoured their distresses to the utmost of her power. She gave them money, jewels, furniture; and even her very clothes; and when she had no more to bestow, she threw herself in tears at her husband's feet, and besought him to have pity upon his subjects. The king sternly answered, Madam, we have taken you to bring us children, not to give us advice. From that time he was said to have treated her with a severity which shortened her days.

He died, himself, within four years after her, on the 15th of April 1697, in the forty-second year of his age, and the thirty-seventh of his reign, at a time when the Empire, Spain, and Holland on one side, and France on the other, were on the point of submitting the decision of their disputes to his mediation, and when he had already planned overtures of peace between those powers.

He left to his son, then fifteen years old, a throne secured and respected abroad ; subjects poor, but warlike and loyal ; and finances in good order, and under the management of able ministers.

Charles XII. upon his coming to the crown, not only found himself absolute and undisturbed master of Sweden and Finland, but also of Livonia, Carelia, and Ingria ; he was in possession of Wismar, Wibourg, the isles of Rugen, Oesel, and finest part of Pomerania, with the dutchy of Bremen and Verden, all conquered by his ancestors, and secured to the crown by long possession, and the solemn treaties of Munster and Oliva, supported by the terror of the Swedish arms. The peace of Ryswick, commenced under

the auspices of the father, was concluded by the son, and he found himself the mediator of Europe, from the first moment of his reign.

The laws of Sweden fix the majority of their kings at the age of fifteen years ; but Charles XI. whose authority was absolute, put off the majority of his son by his last will to eighteen ; by this disposition favouring the ambitious views of his mother Edwiga-Elconora, of Holstein, widow of Charles X. She was appointed by the king her son, guardian to her royal grandson, and regent of the kingdom, conjointly with a council of five persons.

The regent had taken part in the administration under the reign of the king her son. She was now advanced in years ; but her ambition which exceeded her strength and abilities, gave her hopes that she might long enjoy the sweets of power under the king her grandson. She kept him as much as she could from business. The young prince usually passed his time in the chace, or in reviewing his troops, and he would sometimes go through their exercise with them. These amusements seemed only the natural effect of the

vivacity of his age. His conduct evinced no dissatisfaction which could give the regent any uneasiness, and she flattered herself that the dissipation attendant on these exercises would render him incapable of application, and give her the opportunity of governing the longer.

One day in the month of November, the same year that his father died, he had been reviewing several regiments, Piper the counsellor of state was standing by him, and the king appeared quite lost in thought. May I take the liberty, said Piper, to ask your majesty what is the subject that so seriously engages your thoughts? I am thinking, answered the king, that I am worthy to command those brave fellows, and wish that neither they nor I received orders from a woman. Piper seized the opportunity of making his fortune, and knowing that his own reputation was inadequate to the dangerous attempt of taking the regency out of the queen's hands, and hastening the king's majority, proposed the negotiation of the business to count Axel Sparre a man of spirit, and who sought to make himself of im-

portance. He flattered him with the king's confidence, which Sparre easily believing, took the whole upon himself, and set to work for Piper alone. The counsellors of the regency were soon drawn into the scheme, and hastily proceeded to carry it into effect, that they might thereby have the more merit with the king.

They went in a body to propose it to the queen, who never expected such a declaration. The states general were then assembled, and the counsellors of the regency laid the matter before them. There was not a dissenting voice, and the point was carried with a rapidity, that nothing could withstand ; so that Charles XII. expressed but a wish to reign, and in three days the states conferred the government upon him. The queen's power and interest were in an instant overthrown, and she afterwards led a private life, more suitable to her age, though less so to her inclination. The king was crowned on the 24th of December following. He made his entry into Stöckholm on an Alezanian horse, shod with silver, having the sceptre in his hand, and crown on his head, amidst

the acclamations of a whole people, idolising every novelty, and always forming great expectations of a young prince.

The ceremony of the consecration and coronation belongs to the archbishop of Upsal, and of all the rights arrogated by his predecessors, is almost the only one which he retains. After having anointed the king according to custom, he held the crown in his hands, to put it upon his head, when Charles snatched it hastily from the archbishop, and casting a stern look upon the prelate, crowned himself. The crowd, who are always imposed on by an air of grandeur, applauded this action of the king. Even those who had suffered most from the father's disposition, were betrayed into praising in the son, that haughtiness which was the presage of their slavery.

Charles was no sooner at the head of the government, than he gave his confidence and the management of affairs to counsellor Piper, who was soon prime minister in every thing but the name. He shortly after created him a count, a dignity of great eminence in Sweden, and not an

empty title, which may be assumed without any consequence, as in France.

The first trait of the king's administration did not excite favorable ideas; he seemed to have been more impatient than deserving of empire. He had indeed no dangerous passion; but there was no leading feature in his conduct, besides the transports of youth and obstinacy. He appeared proud and careless of business. Even the ambassadors who resided at his court, took him for a person of mean capacity, and represented him as such to their masters. Sweden had the same opinion of him; no one knew his character; he was not even acquainted with it himself, till the storms, which all at once gathered in the north, furnished him with an opportunity of displaying those hitherto concealed talents.

Three powerful princes, taking advantage of his youth, conspired his ruin almost at the same instant. The first, his cousin, was Frederick IV. of Denmark; the second Augustus, elector of Saxony, and king of Poland; and the third and most dangerous was Peter the Great, czar of Moscovy. It will be necessary to lay open the

origin of these wars which have been productive of such great events, beginning with Denmark.

Of the two sisters of Charles XII. the eldest had married the duke of Holstein, a young prince of the greatest courage and good nature. The duke, oppressed by the king of Denmark, came to Stockholm with his princess, to throw himself into the king's arms, and ask his assistance, not only as a brother-in-law, but as the king of a nation, which bore an irreconcilable hatred to the Danes.

The ancient house of Holstein, sunk into that of Oldenbourg, had ascended the throne of Denmark by election in 1449. All the kingdoms of the north were at that time elective. That of Denmark soon after became hereditary. One of its kings, named Christiern III had so great an affection for his brother Adolphus, as is almost without example amongst princes. He would not let him be without sovereign power ; but he could not dismember his own states. He divided with him by an extravagant agreement the duchies of Holstein-Gottorp and Sleswick, set-



ting that the descendants of Adolphus should henceforward govern Holstein, in conjunction with the kings of Denmark, so that the two dutchies were to belong to them both in common; and the king of Denmark could make no innovation in Holstein without the duke, nor the duke without the king. So strange an union, of which however an example had occurred in the same house within a few years, was for nearly fourscore years a source of disputes between the branch of Denmark, and that of Holstein-Gottorp; the kings taking every opportunity to oppress the dukes, and the dukes to be independent. It had cost the last duke his liberty and sovereignty. He however recovered both at the conferences of Altena, in 1689, by the interposition of Sweden, England, and Holland, who were guarantees for the execution of the treaty. But, as a treaty between princes is frequently no more than a submission to necessity, till such time as the stronger can overwhelm the weaker, the quarrel was revived with more virulence than ever between the new king of Denmark and the young duke. While the duke was at Stockholm, the

Danes had already committed acts of hostility in the country of Holstein, and entered into a secret league with the king of Poland, to crush the king of Sweden himself.

Frederick Augustus, elector of Saxony, whom neither the eloquence and negotiations of the abbe de Polignac, nor the great qualifications of the prince of Conti, his competitor for the crown, could prevent being elected king of Poland about two years before, was a prince still less famous for his incredible strength of body, than for his bravery and energetic mind. His court was the most brilliant of any in Europe next to that of Louis XIV. No prince was ever more generous or liberal, nor distributed his favours with so much grace. He had bought one-half of the suffrages of the Polish nobility, and forced the other by the approach of a Saxon army. He thought it necessary to have these troops about him for the better security of his throne; but he wanted a pretence for retaining them in Poland. He therefore designed them for the attack of the king of Sweden in Livonia, upon the opportunity about to be mentioned.

Livonia, the finest and most fruitful province of the north, had formerly belonged to the knights of the Teutonic order. The Russians, Poles, and Swedes, had severally disputed its possession. Sweden had for nearly a hundred years carried off the prize, which was solemnly confirmed by the peace of Oliva.

The late king Charles XI. in his severities towards his subjects, had not spared the Livonians. He had taken from them their privileges, and part of their estates. Patkul, of unhappy memory for his tragical death, was deputed by the Livonian nobility to carry the complaints of the province to the throne. He addressed his master in a respectful, but determined, speech, replete with that manly eloquence, inspired by calamity, when joined with courage ; but princes too often regard these public harangues as futile ceremonies, which it is customary to endure, without paying them any attention. Charles XI. always dissembling when he did not give way to the emotions of his anger, patted Patkul gently upon the shoulder, saying ; you have pleaded for your country like a brave man, I esteem you for it, go

on. Within a few days he caused him to be declared guilty of high-treason, and as such to be condemned to die. Patkul, who had hidden himself, made his escape, and carried his resentments with him into Poland. He was afterwards admitted into the presence of king Augustus. Charles XI. was dead, but Patkul's sentence and his indignation survived. He represented to the king of Poland how easy it would be to conquer Livonia; that the people were desperate, and ready to shake off the Swedish yoke, and their king a child, unable to defend himself. These solicitations were well received by a prince, already tempted with the conquest. Augustus promised on his coronation to use his efforts to recover the provinces which Poland had lost. He conceived, that by making an irruption into Livonia, he should at the same time please the republic, and add security to his power; but he was deceived in both his ideas, however plausible they appeared. Every thing was immediately got ready for a sudden invasion, without first deigning even to recur to the vain formality of declarations of war and manifestoes. The storm

thickened at the same time on the side of Moscovy the monarch of which deserves the attention of posterity.

Peter Alexiowitz, czar of Russia, had already made himself formidable by the battle he had gained over the Turks in 1697, and by the conquest of Asoph, which opened to him the empire of the Black sea. But it was by actions, more glorious than conquests, that he sought the name of great. Moscovy or Russia takes in the north of Asia, and of Europe; and from the frontiers of China extends fifteen hundred leagues to the confines of Poland and Sweden: yet this immense country was scarcely known to Europe before the time of the czar Peter. The Moscovites had made less progress towards civilization than the Mexicans, when discovered by Cortez. Born the slaves of masters as barbarous as themselves they were sunk in ignorance, without either art or science; and in such an insensibility of their wants, as stifled every industry. An old law which they held sacred, forbade them, under pain of death, to quit their country without leave of their patriarch. This law, made on purpose to

take from them all opportunities of knowing their bondage, was acceptable to a nation, which, in the abyss of its ignorance and misery, disdained any commerce with foreign nations.

The Moscovite era began with the creation of the world. They reckoned 7207 years at the commencement of the last century, without being able to give a reason for the date. The first day of their year answered to the 13th of our month of September. They alledged as a reason for its establishment, that God probably created the world in autumn, in the season when the fruits of the earth are at maturity. Thus the only appearance of knowledge they had was founded in gross error; not one of them ever had an idea that the autumn of Moscovy might be the spring of another country in opposite climates: Nor was it long since the people at Moscow would have burnt the secretary of a Persian ambassador, because he had foretold an eclipse of the sun. They did not so much as know the use of figures, but in all their computations made use of little beads, strung upon wire; nor had they any other

way of reckoning in all their counting-houses, nor even in the treasury of the czar.

Their religion was, and still is, that of the Greek church, but intermixed with superstitions, to which they more firmly adhered, in proportion as they were extravagant, and pressed heavier on their yoke. Few Moscovites would venture to eat a pigeon, because the Holy Ghost is depicted as a dove. They regularly observed four lents in the year; and in those times of abstinence dared not presume to eat either eggs or milk. God and St. Nicholas were the objects of their worship, and next to them the czar and the patriarch. The authority of the last was as boundless as their ignorance. He pronounced sentence of death, and inflicted the most cruel punishments, without any appeal from his tribunal. Twice a year he made a solemn procession on horseback, attended by all his clergy. The czar, on foot, held his horse's bridle, and the people in the streets fell prostrate before him, as the Tartars before their grand Lama. Confession was in use, but only in case of the greatest crimes;

and then absolution was held necessary, but not repentance. They looked upon themselves as pure before God, as soon as they had received the benediction of their papas. Thus they passed without remorse from confession to theft and murder; and what is a check upon other Christians, was with them an incentive to wickedness. They made scruples of drinking milk upon a fast-day; but masters of families, priests, women, and girls, would intoxicate themselves with brandy upon a festival. They had religious disputes however among them as in other countries; their greatest controversy was, whether laymen should make the sign of the cross with two fingers or three; and one Jacob Nursuw, in the preceding reign, had raised a sedition in Astracan on the subject of this dispute. There were not wanting even fanatics with them more than in those countries where every man is a theologist; and Peter, who always carried justice to cruel excess, had some of those poor creatures, who were termed woskojesuits, burnt at the stake.

The czar in his vast dominions had many other subjects, who were not Christians. The Tartars,



who inhabit the western coasts of the Caspian sea, and the Palus Mæotis, were Mahometans. The Siberians, Ostiacks, and Samoides, residing near the Frozen sea, were savages, some of them idolaters, and others without the least notion of a God ; and yet the Swedes, who were sent prisoners amongst them, were better pleased with their manners, than with those of the ancient Moscovites.

Peter Alexiowitz had received an education which tended to increase still more the barbarity then prevalent in that part of the world.

His happy disposition inclined him to caress strangers, before he knew whether he should ever be the better for them. Le Fort, as has been before stated, was the first instrument he employed to change the face of Moscovy.

His mighty genius, which a barbarous education had checked, but could not destroy, broke out almost in a moment. He resolved to act the man, to govern men, and to form a new nation. Several princes, before him, had renounced their thrones, from a disgust at the weight of public affairs ; but no one ever put off his royalty that

he might learn to reign better, like Peter the Great. He left Russia in 1698, before he had reigned two years, and went into Holland under an assumed name, as a servant of this very Mr. le Fort whom he appointed ambassador extraordinary to the states general. When he came to Amsterdam, he entered himself on the list of ship-carpenters of the admiralty of the Indies, and wrought upon the stocks like other workmen. In his leisure hours he learnt those parts of mathematics which might be useful to a prince; fortification, navigation, and the art of taking plans. He went into the work-shops, examined all their manufactures, and let nothing escape his observation. From thence he passed into England, where he perfected himself in the art of ship-building. He returned into Holland, and visited Germany, carefully observing whatever might tend to the advantage of his country. At length, after two years of travel and labour, which no one but himself would have undergone, he repaired to Russia, with the arts of Europe in his train. Artists of all kinds followed in abundance; and then were first seen large Russian vessels upon

the Black sea, the Baltic, and the ocean. Buildings of a regular and noble architecture rose in the midst of the Russian huts. He founded colleges, academies, printing-houses, and libraries. Police was introduced into the cities; their habits and customs were gradually changed, though not without difficulty; and the Moscovites, by degrees, learnt what society was. Their very superstitions were abolished, the dignity of the patriarch suppressed, and the czar declared head of the church, which last attempt, though it would have cost a less absolute prince his throne and his life, here succeeded almost without opposition, and secured the success of all his other innovations.

After having humbled an ignorant and barbarous clergy, he was so bold as to instruct, and run the risk of rendering it formidable; but he thought himself above its power. In the few cloisters that remained, he had philosophy and theology taught, though the latter was still tinged with the rudeness of that time from which Peter Alexiowitz had rescued his race. A man of veracity informed me, that he had assisted at

a public thesis, the subject of which was, whether it is a sin to smoke tobacco. The one who answered him, maintained that it was lawful to get drunk with brandy, but that the holy scriptures says, Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth the man.

The monks were dissatisfied with the reform. Scarcely had the czar set up his printing presses, than they were turned against him, asserting that he was the Antichrist; as a proof of which he shaved the living, and in his academy had dissections of the dead. Another monk, determining to make his fortune, refuted the book, and demonstrated that Peter could not be Antichrist, because the number 666 was not in his name. The author of the libel was racked on the wheel, and the respondent made bishop of Rezan.

The reformer of Russia in particular originated one law, which might for its policy put civilized states to the blush; it is that no one in the service of the state, or borough town, particularly being a minor, should go into a cloister.

The prince was well aware of the importance

of not consigning to idleness those subjects which might be of utility, nor permitting them to dispose of their liberty for ever, at an age when they are not allowed to touch a farthing of their property. The exertion of the monks, however, daily evades that law made for the welfare of mankind, and, as it were, peoples the cloisters at the expence of the country.

The czar not only subjected the church to the state, after the example of the Turkish sultans, but with much wiser policy destroyed a soldiery similar to the janizaries; and what the Ottomans attempted in vain, he executed in a short time; he put down the Moscovite janizaries, termed *strelitz*, which kept the czars in subjection. This force, more formidable to its master than to its neighbours, consisted of about three thousand infantry, half of which remained at Moscow, and the others were scattered about the frontiers. The pay of a *strelitz* was but four rubles a year; but his privileges or abuses amply made up for it. Peter set out with establishing a foreign company, in which he enrolled himself; nor did he think it derogatory to begin as a drum-

mer, and go through every duty; so greatly did the nation stand in need of examples. Little by little he completed new regiments, and at length feeling that he had disciplined troops under his command, he broke the strelitz, who dared not disobey.

The cavalry was nearly the same as that of Poland, and as the French formerly was when the kingdom of France was an assemblage of fiefs. The Russian gentry mounted themselves, and fought without discipline, sometimes armed only with a sabre or javelin, ignorant of command, and consequently unable to conquer.

Peter the Great taught them obedience by his own example and by punishments; for he served in the capacity of a soldier and subaltern officer, and rigorously punished as czar those boyards, that is to say, gentry who pleaded the privilege of nobility against serving the state, except at their own pleasure. He established a regular corps of artillery, and took five hundred church bells to cast for cannon. In 1714 he had thirteen thousand pieces of brass cannon. He likewise formed a corps of dragoons; a force

very suitable to the genius of the Russians, and the make of their horses, which are small. Russia now, 1738, has thirty regiments, each a thousand strong, of well appointed dragoons.

Hussars too were introduced into Russia by him. At last he even went so far as to have a school of engineers in a country, where, until his time, no one knew the elements of geometry.

He was himself a good engineer, but his forte was in the marine arts; a good captain, skilful pilot, clever sailor, and expert carpenter; and he was entitled to the greater credit in his acquirements, as he was born with extreme fear of the water. He could not, when young, pass over a bridge without trembling, and would desire the blinds of the carriage to be drawn up; but courage and genius overcame this mechanical weakness. He constructed a fine harbour near Asoph, at the mouth of the Tanais, for the keeping up of galleys, and subsequently considering that those long flat and light vessels must answer in the Baltic, he built about three hundred in his favorite city of Petersburg. He showed his subjects the art of building them of deal, and navigating them.

He had studied surgery, and has been known, in cases of necessity, to tap an hydropic. He was an adept in mechanics, and instructed his artisans.

The czar's finances were indeed trivial, compared to the immensity of his states: he never had a revenue of twenty-four millions, reckoning the mark at nearly two guineas, as is the case to-day, and perhaps may not be to-morrow; but what is meant by being rich, is to be able to accomplish great things. It is not the scarcity of money, but that of men and talents, which makes an empire weak. The nation of the Russias is not numerous, although the women are fruitful and the men strong. Peter himself, while he polished his states, unhappily contributed to their depopulation. The frequency of recruiting in wars, long unfortunate, nations transported from the banks of the Caspian to the shores of the Baltic, worn out in laborious exertions, victims to disease, three out of four of all the children dying of the small-pox, which is more fatal in those climates than elsewhere: in fine, the sad conse-



quences of a government so long in a savage and barbarous state, even in regard to its police, are the cause why that great portion of the continent still remains a vast desert. Russia is at present, 1727, estimated to contain 500,000 families, 200,000 lawyers, somewhat more than 5,000,000 citizens and peasants paying a kind of tax, 600,000 men in the conquered Swedish provinces; the Cossacks of Ukraine and Tartary do not at the utmost amount to 2,000,000. In short, those immense countries have been found not to contain more than 14,000,000 of men, or rather above two thirds of the inhabitants of France.

The czar Peter, in changing the manners, laws, military, and face of his country, likewise aimed at attaining rank in commerce, which is at once a mine of wealth to the state, and an advantage to the whole world.

He undertook to render Russia one day the centre of the trade of Asia and Europe. The Dwina, Wolga, and Tanais, were to be united by canals, of which he laid down the plans him-

self; and thus he proposed to open new ways from the Baltick to the Euxine and Caspian seas, and thence to the northern ocean.

The port of Archangel, shut up by the ice nine months of the year, and to get to which requires a long and dangerous circuit, did not seem to be sufficiently commodious. Ever since the year 1700, he had projected the design of building an harbour on the Baltic, which should become the magazine of the north, and a city, to be the capital of the empire.

He was already endeavouring to discover a passage by the north-eastern seas to China, and his new city was to be embellished by the manufactures of Paris and Pekin.

A high road of 754 versts carried across marshes, which he had to fill up, led from Moscow to his new city. His projects were for the most part carried into execution by himself; and two successive empresses have still extended his views, where they were practicable, and only gave way to impossibilities. As far as his wars permitted, he always travelled in his states, but he travelled as a legislator and physician, examining

nature in all its forms, seeking how to correct or carry it to perfection, taking soundings of seas and rivers, ordering sluices, visiting dock-yards, sinking mines, analysing metals, making accurate maps, and working at the whole with his own hands.

In a wild spot he built the city of Petersburg, which now contains 60,000 houses, where, in our own times, has been formed a splendid court, in which the most refined pleasures are not unknown. The port of Cronstadt on the Neva, St. Croix, on the frontiers of Persia, forts on the Ukraine and in Siberia, dock-yards at Archangel, Petersburg, and Asoph, arsenals and hospitals have been built by him. All his houses were small and ill contrived; but on public places he lavished magnificence and grandeur.

Science which, in other parts, was the tardy fruit of so many ages, by his care came to his states in full perfection. He established an academy on the model of the famous societies of Paris and London. The Delisles, Bulfingers, Hermanns, Bernoullis, and the celebrated Wolf, a man excelling in every branch of philosophy, were, at

unbounded cost, attracted to Petersburg. This academy yet exists, and is now forming Moscovite philosophers.

The young nobility of his states were compelled to travel for information, that they might bring foreign politeness back with them into Russia. I have seen young Russians, whose minds were replete with genius and knowledge. Thus it is, one man has changed the nature of the greatest empire in the world. It is a lamentable consideration, that this reform of mankind, was deficient in that first of virtues, humanity. Brutality in his pleasures, ferocity of manners, barbarity in revenge, foiled such great virtues. He gave a polish to his nation, and was himself a savage. He has been known to execute, with his own hands, his own sentences against criminals; and at a table debauch, display his dexterity in cutting off heads. Africa contains monarchs who shed their subjects' blood with their own hands; but they pass for barbarians. The death of a son who deserved correction or disinheritance, would render Peter's memory odious, if the benefits derived from him by his subjects had not almost made cruelty towards his own nature pardonable.

Such was the czar Peter, and his great designs were still but mere sketches when he joined the kings of Poland and Denmark against a child, whom they all held in contempt. The founder of Russia longed to be a conqueror ; he thought it might be accomplished without difficulty ; and that a war so well planned, would advance all his projects. War was a new art, which his people had yet to learn.

Besides, he felt the want of a port on the eastern side of the Baltic, for the full execution of his views. He stood in need of the province of Ingria, which is to the north-east of Livonia, in possession of the Swedes, from whom he must wrest it. His predecessors had claims on Ingria, Estonia, and Livonia ; the time seemed propitious for the revival of rights, which had lain dormant a hundred years, and were annulled by treaties. He therefore concluded an alliance with the king of Poland, to take from the young Charles XII. all the countries between the gulph of Finland, the Baltic sea, Poland, and Moscovy.

## BOOK II.

*Prodigious and sudden Change in the Character of Charles XII. At eighteen Years of Age he supports a War against Denmark, Poland, and Moscovy. Terminates the War with Denmark in Six Weeks. With Eight Thousand Swedes defeats Eighty Thousand Moscovites, and enters Poland. Description of Poland and its Government. Charles gains several Battles, and is Master of Poland, of which he makes Preparation to appoint himself King.*

THREE powerful kings thus menaced the infancy of Charles XII. The rumours of these preparations threw Sweden into confusion, and alarmed the council. The great generals were no more, and every thing was to be apprehended under a youthful king, who had hitherto excited impressions by no means favorable. He scarcely ever assisted in the council, but to sit cross legged upon the table; absent and indifferent, he seemed to take no part in what was going forward.

The council was deliberating in his presence

on the danger of their situation, and some of them proposed to avert the tempest by negotiations, when the young prince suddenly rising, with the gravity and confidence of a superior mind, whose resolution was taken, Gentlemen, said he, I am resolved never to enter upon an unjust war, nor to end a just one but by the destruction of my enemies. My resolution is fixed. I will attack the first who shall declare against me, and when I have conquered him, I may hope to strike terror into the rest. These words astonished all the old counsellors, they looked at each other without daring to reply. At last, surprised to find they had such a king, and ashamed to hope less than him, they received his orders for war with admiration.

Their wonder was still greater, when they saw him of a sudden renounce all the most innocent amusements of youth. From the moment he prepared for war, he entered upon a new course of life, from which he never after departed, even for a moment. Full of the idea of Alexander and Cæsar, he proposed to imitate those two conquerors in every thing but their vices. He no

more indulged himself in magnificence, sports, and recreations ; he reduced his table to the utmost frugality. He had been fond of gaiety in dress, but was ever after clad like a common soldier. He was suspected of a passion for a lady of his court ; but whether the suspicion were true or false, certain it is, that he then renounced all the sex for ever ; not only from apprehension of being enslaved to them, but to give the soldiers an example, that he would conform to the most rigorous discipline ; it might still be through the vanity of being the sole prince who could suppress an inclination so difficult to be conquered. He determined also to abstain from wine all the rest of his life. I have been told, that his motive in so doing was to completely change the course of nature, and add a new virtue to heroism ; but a greater number have assured me, that he meant thereby to punish himself for a former excess, and for an affront he had put upon a lady at table, even in the presence of the queen his mother. If it is so, this self condemnation and privation which he imposed for life, are a species of heroism no less deserving of admiration.



He began by assuring his brother-in-law, the duke of Holstein, of assistance. Eight thousand men were immediately sent into Pomerania, a province not far from Holstein, to strengthen the duke against the Danes. The duke stood in need of them. His dominions were already ravaged, the cattle of Gottorp taken, and the town of Tønningen pressed by a close siege, whereto the king of Denmark was come in person, that he might enjoy a conquest which he thought secure. This spark began to inflame the empire. On one side the Saxon troops of the king of Poland, those of Brandenburg, Wolfenbutel, and Hesse-cassel, marched to join the Danes. On the other, the king of Sweden's eight thousand men, the troops of Hanover and Zell, and three Dutch regiments, were on the march to assist the duke. Whilst the little country of Holstein was thus made the theatre of the war, two squadrons, the one from England, and the other from Holland, made their appearance in the Baltic. These two states were guarantecs of the treaty of Altena, which the Danes had broken: they hastened to the relief of the oppressed duke of Holstein, because the in-

terest of their commerce was incompatible with the growing power of the king of Denmark. They knew the Dane, once master of the Sound, would impose burthensome laws on the trading nations, should he ever be strong enough to do it with impunity. This interest has long engaged the English and Dutch, to hold the balance as even as possible between the princes of the north. They joined the young king of Sweden, who seemed in danger of being overpowered by so many united enemies, and succoured him for the same reason that the others fell upon him, because they thought him incapable of defending himself. He was a bear hunting when he received the news of the Saxon irruption into Livonia. He pursued the chase in a manner as novel as it was dangerous, with no other arms than forked sticks, behind a net, extended to the trees. A bear of immeasurable size made right at the king, who, after a long struggle, by means of his net and stick, felled him to the earth. It must be confessed, that reflecting on such adventures, with the prodigious bodily strength of Augustus, and the czar's travels, we might fancy

ourselves in the times of Hercules and Theseus. Charles set out for his first campaign on the 8th of May, new style, in the year 1700. He left Stockholm, to which he never returned. An immense body of people attended him as far as Carlescroon, offering up their prayers, shedding tears, and admiring him. Before he left Sweden, he established at Stockholm a council of defence, made up of several senators. Their commission was to take care of all that regarded the fleet, the troops, and fortifications of the country. The body of the senate was to regulate, provisionally, every thing else within the kingdom. Having thus settled order and regularity in his dominions, his mind, free from all other care, was bent wholly upon the war. His fleet consisted of three and forty vessels; that which carried him, named the king Charles, and the biggest they had ever seen, was a ship of an hundred and twenty guns: count Piper, his first minister, and general Renschild, embarked with him. He joined the squadrons of the allies. The Danish fleet declined the engagement, and gave the three combined fleets the opportunity of drawing so

near Copenhagen, as to throw some bombs into the city.

It is ascertained to have been the king's own proposition to general Renschild to make a landing, and besiege Copenhagen by land, while it was blockaded by sea. Renschild was struck with admiration at a proposal which denoted as much ability as knowledge in a young prince, unassisted by the advantages of experience. All was prepared without delay, and orders were immediately given to embark five thousand men, who laid upon the coast of Sweden, and were joined to the troops already on board. The king quitted his great ship, and hoisted his flag in a light frigate. Three hundred grenadiers were first dispatched in small shallops, with which went small flat-bottomed boats, laden with fascines, chevaux de frize, and pioneers' implements. Five hundred picked men followed after in other shallops. Then came the king's men of war, with two English and two Dutch frigates, to cover the disembarkation.

Copenhagen the capital of Denmark, situate on the isle of Zealand, stands in the middle of

a beautiful plain, which has the Sound on the north-east, and on the west the Baltic, where the king of Sweden then laid. Upon the unexpected movement of the vessels, which threatened a descent, the inhabitants, in consternation at the inactivity of their own fleet, and the motion of the Swedish ships, looked round with terror to see in what place the storm would fall. Charles's fleet brought to, opposite Humblebeck, within seven miles of Copenhagen. Here the Danes immediately drew up their horse. The foot were posted behind thick entrenchments, and what artillery they could get thither was pointed against the Swedes.

The king then quitted his frigate to throw himself into the first shallop, at the head of his guards. The ambassador of France was by his side; Sir, said the king to him in Latin, for he would never speak French, you have no difference with the Danes, you shall, if you please, go no farther. Sir, answered the count-de Guiscard in French, the king my master ordered me to attend your majesty closely; I flatter myself you will not this day drive me from your court, which

never before appeared so splendid. As he spoke these words, he gave his hand to the king, who leapt into the shallop, whither count Piper and the ambassador followed. They advanced under favour of the guns of the vessels, which covered the landing. The small boats were about a hundred yards off the shore; Charles impatient to land, jumped into the sea, sword in his hand, the water reaching above his middle. His ministers, the French ambassadors, the officers and soldiers immediately followed his example, and gained the shore, in the face of a shower of musketry. The king, who never in his life before heard a discharge of muskets loaded with ball, asked major-general Stuart, who stood next him, What whistling noise it was which he heard? The noise of the musket-balls, said the major. That's right, said the king, in future, it shall be my music. At the same moment the officer, who explained the noise to him, received a shot in his shoulder; and a lieutenant at his other side fell dead. Troops attacked in their intrenchments are commonly beaten, because the assailants always have an impetuosity which the defenders cannot have; be-

sides, to wait for the enemy in one's lines, is generally a confession of the weakness of the one and superiority of the other. The Danish horse and foot took to their heels after a faint resistance. The king no sooner found himself master of their intrenchments than he fell upon his knees to thank God for the first success of his arms. He immediately caused redoubts to be raised before the town, and himself marked out the encampment. At the same time he sent back his vessels to Schonen, a part of Sweden not far from Copenhagen, for a reinforcement of nine thousand men. Every thing conspired to promote the vivacity of Charles. The nine thousand men were upon the shore ready to embark, and the next morning the wind blowing favourably their junction was effected.

All this passed in sight of the Danish fleet, which durst not venture to interpose. Copenhagen, intimidated, directly sent deputies to the king to entreat him not to bombard the city. He received them on horseback at the head of his regiment of guards, and the deputies fell upon their knees before him. He demanded of the town

four hundred thousand rix-dollars, with orders to supply his camp with all sorts of provisions, which he promised should be honestly paid for. They brought him the provisions, because they durst not refuse them, but were in no expectation that the conquerors would vouchsafe to pay for them; and those who brought them were astonished to find that they were generously paid and without delay, by the meanest soldiers in the army. There had long reigned in the Swedish troops a strict discipline, which contributed in no small degree to their victory; and the young king made it still more severe. There was not a soldier who dared to refuse payment for whatever he bought, much less go a maurading, nor even stir out of the camp. He would not so much as allow his troops after a victory, the privilege of stripping the dead, till they had his permission, and easily brought them to the observance of this order. Prayers were constantly said in his camp twice a day, at seven in the morning, and four in the afternoon; and he never failed to be present at them himself, to set his soldiers an example of piety, which made the stronger impression as



he was not suspected of hypocrisy. His camp, which was far better regulated than Copenhagen, had every thing in abundance; and the country people chose rather to sell their provisions to their enemies the Swedes, than to the Danes, who did not pay so well. The citizens were more than once obliged to fetch from the king of Sweden's camp, provisions which their markets stood in need of.

The king of Denmark was then in Holstein, whither he seemed to have marched only to raise the siege of Tonningen. He saw the Baltic covered with hostile ships, a young conqueror already master of Zealand, and about to take possession of the capital; he published a declaration, that whoever would take up arms against the Swedes should have their liberty. This declaration had great weight in a country, formerly free, where all the peasants, and even many of the townsmen were slaves. Charles XII. let the king of Denmark know, that he made war for no other reason but to oblige him to make peace; and that he must either resolve to do justice to the duke of Holstein, or see Copenhagen destroyed, and his

kingdom laid waste by fire and sword. The Dane was more fortunate than he deserved, in having to do with a conqueror, who piqued himself upon his justice. A congress was assembled in the town of Travendal, on the frontiers of Holstein. The king of Sweden would not suffer the artifice of the ministers to protract the negotiations into any length ; he would have the treaty finished with as much rapidity as he made his descent into Zealand ; and it was actually concluded on the 5th of August, to the advantage of the duke of Holstein, who was indemnified for all the expences of the war, and delivered from oppression. The king of Sweden would accept of nothing for himself, being satisfied with having relieved his ally, and humbled his enemy. Thus Charles XII. at eighteen years of age began and ended this war in less than six weeks.

Precisely at the same time the king of Poland in person laid siege to Riga, the capital of Livonia ; and the czar was upon his march, on the east side, at the head of an hundred thousand men. Riga was defended by the old count d'Alberg, a Swedish general, who at the age of four-

score joined all the fire of youth to the experience of sixty campaigns. Count Fleming, since minister of Poland, a great man both in the field and in the cabinet, and Mr. Patkul, pushed the siege under the king's direction ; but notwithstanding several advantages which the besiegers had gained, the experience of the old count d'Alberg rendered all their efforts fruitless, and the king of Poland despaired of taking the city. He at last laid hold of an honourable opportunity to raise the siege. Riga was full of merchandise, belonging to the Dutch. The states general ordered their ambassador with king Augustus, to make proper representations on the subject. The king of Poland did not stand in need of much intreaty. He consented to raise the siege rather than occasion the least injury to his allies : who were not immoderately surprised at his excessive complaisance, as they knew the real cause of it.

Nothing now remained for Charles XII. to finish his first campaign, than to march against his rival in glory, Peter Alexiowitz. He was the more enraged against him, as there were still at

Stockholm, three Moscovite ambassadors who had lately sworn to renew an inviolable peace. He who valued himself upon severe probity, could not comprehend how a legislator like the czar could make a jest of what ought to be held so sacred. The young prince, full of honour, did not so much as dream, that there could be a different morality for princes and private persons. The emperor of Moscovy published a manifesto, which he had much better have suppressed. He alledged in justification of the war, that they had not paid him sufficient honours, when he went incognito to Riga; and that they charged his ambassadors too high for provisions. These were the injuries for which he ravaged Ingria with a hundred thousand men.

He appeared before Narva at the head of this great army on the first of October, in a season more severe in that climate than the month of January at Paris. The czar, who in such weather would sometimes ride post four hundred leagues to see a mine or a canal, spared his troops no more than himself. Besides, he knew that the Swedes ever since the time of Gustavus Adol-

phus would make war in the depth of winter as well as in summer, and he wanted to accustom his Moscovites in like manner to lose all distinction of seasons, and to make them, one day, at least equal to the Swedes. Thus at a time when frost and snow oblige other nations, in temperate climates to a suspension of arms, the czar Peter laid siege to Narva within thirty degrees of the pole, and Charles XII. was upon his march to relieve it.

The czar no sooner arrived before the place, than he made haste to put in practice what he had lately learnt in his travels. He marked out his camp, fortified it on all sides, raised redoubts at certain distances, and opened the trench himself. He had given the command of his army to the duke de Croix, a German, and an able general, but at that time very little assisted by the Moscovite officers. For himself, he held only the rank of a lieutenant in his army. He had given an example of military obedience to his nobility, who till then had been above discipline ; had no experience, and could only lead a set of ill-armed tumultuous slaves. It is by no means

to be wondered at, that he, who at Amsterdam turned carpenter to procure himself fleets, should become a lieutenant at Narva to teach his nation the art of war.

The Moscovites are strong, indefatigable, nor perhaps less courageous than the Swedes ; but it requires time to form experienced troops, and discipline to make them invincible. The only troops on which great reliance could be placed were commanded by German officers, but they were few in number. The rest were barbarians forced from their forests, and covered with the skins of wild beasts, some armed with arrows, others with clubs ; few of them had firelocks, not one had seen a regular siege, neither was there a good artilleryman in the whole army. An hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, which were sufficient to have reduced the little town of Narva to ashes, were scarce able to make a breach, while the artillery of the town momentarily destroyed whole ranks in the trenches. Narva was almost without fortifications, and baron Hoorn, its commandant, had not a thousand regular troops ; and yet this immense

army was not able to effect its surrender in ten weeks.

On the 15th of November, the czar had information that the king of Sweden having crossed the sea with two hundred transports, was upon his march to relieve Narva. The Swedes were no more than twenty thousand, but the czar's only advantage was superiority of number. Far therefore from despising his enemy, he employed all his art to crush him. Not content with eighty thousand men, he was getting together another army to oppose to him, and dispute every inch of ground. He had already given orders for nearly forty thousand men, who were advancing from Pleskow by forced marches. Were it possible for a legislator who had accomplished objects of such importance to be rendered contemptible, the next step he had recourse to would have effected it. He quitted his camp, where his presence was most necessary, to bring up those troops which could have come as well without him, and seemed by this resolve to be afraid to risk a battle in an entrenched camp, with an inexperienced young

prince who might come to the attack. However this might be, he thought to hem in Charles XII. between two armies. Nor was this all ; a detachment of thirty thousand men from the camp before Narva were posted a league from the town, directly in the road the king of Sweden had to pass : 20,000 Strelits were placed farther on the same road, and 5,000 others made up an advanced guard. He must necessarily force his way through all these troops before he could reach the camp, which was fortified with a rampart and double fosse. The king of Sweden had landed at Pernaw in the gulph of Riga, with about sixteen thousand foot, and somewhat more than four thousand horse.

From Pernaw he made a forced march to Revel, followed by all his horse, and only four thousand of his foot. He continued to march forward, without waiting for the rest of his troops ; and soon found himself with his eight thousand before the first posts of the enemy. He did not hesitate to attack them all, one after another, without giving them time to learn with how small a number they had to engage. The Mos-



covites seeing the Swedes come upon them, thought they had a whole army to encounter. The advanced guard of five thousand men, who kept a pass, between rocks, where a hundred resolute men might have set a whole army at defiance, fled on the first approach of the Swedes. The twenty thousand beyond them terrified with the flight of their countrymen, were panic struck, and carried confusion into the camp. All the posts were forced in two days; and what upon other occasions would have been reckoned three victories, did not retard the king's march one hour. At last he appeared with his eight thousand men, wearied with so long a march, in front of a camp of eighty thousand Russians, surrounded by an hundred and fifty cannon. Scarcely did he allow his troops time for rest, when without farther deliberation he gave orders for the attack.

The signal was two firelocks, and the word in German, With the aid of God. A general officer having represented to him the imminence of the danger, What, said he, have you a doubt I with my eight thousand brave Swedes shall rout eighty thousand Moscovites? A moment after-

wards, fearing there was a little gasconade in what he said, he ran after the officer. Are not you then, said he, of my opinion? have not I a twofold advantage over the enemy; one, that their horse can be of no service; and the other, that the place being confined, their great number will only incommode them, and therefore in reality I shall be stronger than they are? The officer did not think fit to differ with him, and they marched against the Moscovites at noon on the 30th of November 1700.

As soon as the Swedish cannon had made a breach in the entrenchments, they advanced with bayonets fixed and at their backs a violent storm of snow, which drove full in the face of the enemy. The Russians suffered themselves to be put to death for half an hour, without quitting their posts. The king attacked the right of the camp which was the czar's quarter, in hopes of encountering him, not knowing that the emperor was gone in quest of his forty thousand men, who were daily expected. Upon the first discharge of the enemy's musquetry, the king received a ball in the throat, but it was spent and stopped in the

folds of his black cravat without doing him the least injury. His horse was killed under him. M. de Shaar told me that the king nimbly mounted another horse, saying, These fellows make me go through my exercise ; and then he continued the engagement and gave orders with the same presence of mind as before. After three hours fighting the entrenchments were carried on all sides. The king pursued the enemy's right as far as the river Narva, with his left wing, if about four thousand men, in pursuit of nearly fifty thousand men, could be so termed. The bridge gave way under the fugitives, and the river was in a moment covered with dead. The rest in despair returned to their camp, without knowing whither they went ; and finding certain barracks, took post behind them. There they defended themselves a while, as not knowing how to escape ; but at last their generals Dolgorouki, Gollowkin, and Fedorowitz surrendered themselves to the king, and laid their arms at his feet. While they were offering them, came up the duke de Croi, general of the army, to surrender himself with thirty officers.

Charles received all these distinguished prisoners with as easy a politeness, and as obliging an air, as if he had been paying them the honours of an entertainment in his own court. He only detained the generals. All the subalterns and soldiers were disarmed and conducted to the river Nárva, where they were furnished with boats to carry them over, and return back to their homes. Night was however coming on, and the left wing of the Moscovites still continued fighting. The Swedes had not lost fifteen hundred men; eighteen thousand Moscovites had been killed in their entrenchments; a great number was drowned; many had passed the river but still there remained enough in the camp to exterminate the Swedes even to the last man. It is not the number of the dead, but the terror of those who survive, that gives the finishing stroke to victories. The king profited by the little day that remained to seize the enemy's artillery. He posted himself advantageously between their camp and the town; there he slept some hours on the ground, wrapt up in his cloak, expecting at day-break to fall upon the enemy's left wing, which

had not been entirely routed. At two o'clock in the morning, General Wade, who commanded the left having heard the gracious reception the king had given to the other generals, and how he had sent home all the subaltern officers and soldiers, desired that he would grant him the same favour. The conqueror made answer, that he had only to advance at the head of his troops, and lay down his arms and colours before him. The general soon after appeared with his Moscovites, to the number of about thirty thousand. They marched soldiers and officers, with their heads uncovered, in front of less than seven thousand Swedes. The soldiers as they passed the king, threw down their firelocks and swords, and the officers brought their ensigns and colours and laid at his feet. He caused the whole multitude to cross the river, without retaining a single soldier prisoner. Had he kept them, the number of the prisoners would have been at least five times greater than that of the conquerors.

He then entered victorious into Narva, accompanied by the duke de Croi, and the other Moscovite general officers. He ordered all their

swords to be returned to them, and knowing that they were in want of money, and that the merchants of Narva would not lend them any, he sent the duke of Cröi, a thousand ducats, and five hundred to each of the Moscovite officers, who could never sufficiently admire this treatment, of which they had not the least idea. An account of the victory was immediately drawn up at Narva to send to Stockholm and the allies of Sweden, but the king erased with his own hand whatever was reported too much to his own advantage, or to the detriment of the czar. His modesty could not prevent their striking, at Stockholm, several medals to perpetuate the memory of these events. Among the rest one was struck the obverse of which represented him on a pedestal, to which appeared chained a Moscovite, a Dane, and a Pole; and on the reverse an Hercules armed with his club, holding a Cerberus under his feet, with this inscription, *Tres uno contudit ictu.*

Among the prisoners taken at the battle of Narva, one exhibited a remarkable instance of the mutability of fortune. He was the eldest son and heir of the king of Georgia, and was called

the czarasis Artschelow, which amongst all the Tartars, as well as in Moscovy, signifies prince or son of the czar for the word czar or tsar, indicating king among the antient Scythians, from whom all those people are descended, is by no means derived from the Cæsars of Rome, so long unknown to these barbarians. His father Mittelleski, czar, and master of the finest part of the country between the mountains of Ararat and the eastern extremities of the Black Sea, had been driven from his kingdom by his own subjects in 1688; and chose rather to throw himself into the arms of the emperor of Moscovy, than apply to the Turks. This king's son, nineteen years of age, was desirous of attending Peter the Great in his expedition against the Swedes, and was taken in battle by some Finland soldiers, who had already stripped, and were upon the point of putting him to death. Count Renschild rescued him from their hands, supplied him with clothes, and presented him to his master. Charles sent him to Stockholm, where the unfortunate prince died some few years after. Upon his taking leave, the king could not avoid making aloud in

the hearing of his officers a natural reflection upon the strange fate of an Asiatic prince born at the foot of mount Caucasus, going to live a prisoner amid the ice of Sweden. It is, said he, as if I were one day to be a prisoner among the Tartars of the Crimea. These words, at that time, made no impression, but were afterwards but too well remembered, when the event had confirmed the prediction.

The czar was advancing by long marches with an army of forty thousand Russians, in expectation of surrounding his enemy on all sides. About half way he received intelligence of the battle of Narva, and dispersion of his whole camp. He judged it not convenient with his forty thousand raw and undisciplined men, to engage a conqueror, who had lately destroyed eighty thousand intrenched in their camp. He retraced his steps, still pursuing his resolution of disciplining his troops, at the same time that he civilized his subjects. I well know, said he, the Swedes will beat us for a time, but they will ultimately teach us to beat them. Moscow, his capital, was in the utmost terror and desolation, at the news of



this defeat. Such was the pride and ignorance of the people, that they could not be persuaded but they had been conquered by more than human power, and that the Swedes were absolutely magicians. This opinion was so general, that public prayers were ordered to be put up to St. Nicholas, the patron of Moscovy, upon the occasion. The form is too singular to be here omitted. It runs thus :

O thou who art our perpetual comforter in all our adversities, great St. Nicholas, infinitely powerful, by what sin have we offended thee in our sacrifices, genuflexions, reverences, and thanksgivings, that thou hast thus forsaken us ? We have implored thy assistance against these terrible, insolent, enraged, dreadful, insuperable destroyers, when like lions and bears, which have lost their young, they have attacked us, terrified, wounded, slain by thousands, us who are thy people ! As it is impossible this could have happened without witchcraft and enchantment, we beseech thee, O great St. Nicholas, to be our champion and standard-bearer, to deliver us from this crowd of sorcerers, and drive them afar from

our frontiers with the reward which they deserve !

Whilst the Russians were complaining of their defeat to St. Nicholas, Charles XII. returned thanks to God, and prepared for new victories.

The king of Poland reasonably expected, that his enemy, victorious over the Danes and Moscovites, would soon vent his fury on him. He entered into a strict league with the czar. The two princes agreed upon an interview, the better to concert their measures. They met at Birsén, a small town in Lithuania, without any of those formalities, which serve only to retard business, and which were neither agreeable to their situation nor their humour. The northern princes visit each other with a familiarity which is not yet adopted in the South of Europe. Peter and Augustus passed fifteen days together in pleasures which they carried to excess ; for the czar with all his wish for the reformation of his kingdom, could never correct his own dangerous inclination for debauchery.

The king of Poland engaged to furnish the

czar with fifty thousand German troops, to be hired from various princes, and which the czar was to pay for. He, on the other hand, was to send fifty thousand Russians into Poland, to learn the art of war, and promised to pay king Augustus three millions of rixdollars in two years. Had this treaty been executed, it might have proved fatal to the king of Sweden; it was a ready and certain way to make the Moscovites good soldiers; and would perhaps have forged chains for a part of Europe.

Charles XII. used his utmost endeavours to prevent the king of Poland from reaping the benefit of this treaty. After he had passed the winter at Narva, he appeared in Livonia before the very town of Riga, which king Augustus had unsuccessfully besieged. The Saxon troops were posted along the river Dwina, which is very broad in that place, and it was necessary to dispute the passage with Charles, who laid on the other side of the river. The Saxons were not commanded by their prince, who was then sick, but were headed by mareschal Stenau, who took upon him his general's duties; prince Ferdinand, duke of

Courland, commanded under him ; and the same Patkul who defended his country, sword in hand, against Charles XII. after having asserted its rights with the pen against Charles XI. The king of Sweden had caused great boats to be made upon a new construction : their sides were much higher than ordinary, and could be raised or let down, like draw-bridges. When raised, they covered the troops they carried, and let down, served as a bridge for disembarking. He likewise made use of another stratagem. Having observed that the wind blew directly from the north, where he laid, to the south, where his enemies were encamped, he set fire to a large heap of wet straw, which diffusing a thick smoke over the river, prevented the Saxons from seeing his troops, and what he was about to do. By means of this cloud he sent out barks laden with more of the same smoking straw, so that the cloud increasing, and being driven by the wind directly in the face of his enemies, made it impossible for them to know whether he was on his passage or not. He however conducted the execution of his scheme himself. Having got half-way across, Well, said

he to general Renschild, the Dwina will not use us worse than the sea of Copenhagen; take my word for it, general, we shall beat them. In a quarter of an hour he reached the other side, and was vexed to find that three people had leapt ashore before him. He immediately landed his cannon, and formed, in a line, before the enemy, who were blinded with smoke, could oppose him but by a few shot discharged at random. The wind having dispersed the mist, the Saxons saw the king of Sweden already upon his march against them.

Mareschal Stenau lost not a moment; no sooner did he perceive the Swedes, than he fell furiously upon them with the flower of his horse. The violent shock of the troop upon the Swedes in the instant they were forming their battalions, threw them into disorder. They gave way, were broken, and pursued even into the river. The king of Sweden rallied them in a moment in the midst of the water, with as much ease as if he had been at a review. The soldiers then, marching more compact than before, repulsed mareschal Stenau, and advanced into the plain. Stenau was sen-

sible that his troops were in consternation, and very dexterously made them retire into a dry place, flanked by a morass, and a wood, wherein was his artillery. The advantage of the ground, and the time he had given the Saxons to recover from their first surprize, restored them to their courage. Charles immediately attacked them, having with him fifteen thousand men, and Ste-nau and the duke of Courland about twelve thousand, and their whole artillery one iron gun, without a carriage. The battle was sharp and bloody; the duke had two horses killed under him; thrice he penetrated into the midst of the king's guard; but being at last beaten off his horse by a blow from the but-end of a musquet, his army fell into confusion, and disputed the victory no longer. His cuirassiers carried him off with difficulty, greatly bruised, and half dead, from the thickest of the fight, and under the horses, which were trampling on him.

The king of Sweden, after this victory, marched immediately to Mittau, the capital of Courland. All the towns of the Dutchy surrendered to him at discretion; it was rather a journey than a con-

quest. He passed without delay into Lithuania, every thing submitting before him. He felt a pleasing satisfaction, as he owned himself, when he entered as a conqueror the very town of Birsen, where the king of Poland and the czar had but a few months before plotted his destruction.

In this place it was that he conceived the design of dethroning the king of Poland by the hands of the Poles themselves. As he was one day at table, wholly taken up with the thoughts of this enterprize, and observing his usual sobriety, in profound silence, appearing, as it were, buried in his vast ideas, a German colonel, present at his dinner, said loud enough to be heard, that the meals which the czar and the king of Poland had made in the same place, were something different from those of his majesty. Yes, said the king, rising, and I shall the more easily spoil their digestion. In short, intermixing at that time a little policy with the force of his arms, he made no delay in preparing the event he had in contemplation.

Poland, that part of ancient Sarmatia, is rather longer, but less populous, than France, and more

so than Sweden. Its inhabitants have only been christians for about seven hundred and fifty years. It is a singular circumstance, that the language of the Romans, who never penetrated those climates, is at this day the common language of Poland, where every one, even to the very domestics, speaks Latin. It is very fruitful; but the people are therefore less industrious. The workmen and merchants to be met with in Poland are Scotch, French, and particularly Jews, who have nearly three hundred synagogues there; and as their increase is so great, will at some period be driven out, as was the case in Spain. They purchase, for scarcely any price, corn, cattle, and the revenues of the country, barter them at Dantzic and in Germany, and sell at a high rate to the nobles what satisfies that kind of luxury, which they are acquainted with and prefer. Thus this country, watered by the finest rivers, rich in pastures and salt mines, and the most abundant harvests, remains poor, notwithstanding its plenty, because the people are slaves, and the nobility proud and lazy.

Its government is the most exact image of the



old Celtic and Gothic governments, which have been corrected or altered every where else. It is the sole state which has preserved the name of republic in conjunction with the royal dignity. Every gentleman has the right of giving his vote in the election of a king; which he is qualified to become himself. The most desirable of these rights is connected with the greatest abuses. The throne is almost always put up to the highest bidder; and as a Polander is rarely so rich as to be able to make the purchase, it has often been disposed of to foreigners. The nobility and clergy maintain their liberty against the king, and take it from the rest of the nation. The body of the people are slaves; such is the fate of mankind, that the greatest number, in one sort or other, is always enslaved by the smaller. There the peasant sows not for himself, but for his lord, to whom he and his land, as well as his manual labours belong, and who can sell him or cut his throat with the same impunity as he can the beasts of the field. Every gentleman is independent. Judgment cannot be given against him in a criminal cause, unless by an assembly of the

whole nation; nor can his person be seized, till after he is condemned: thus he is seldom or never punished. The poor are numerous, and let themselves out to the more wealthy, from whom they receive a salary, and discharge the meanest offices, chusing rather to serve their equals, than to enrich themselves by trade; and while they are rubbing down their masters' horses, style themselves the makers of kings, and destroyers of tyrants.

Whoever were to see a king of Poland in the pomp of royal majesty, would be apt to think him the most absolute prince in Europe, and yet he is certainly the least so. The Poles really make, with him, that contract, which is in other nations supposed to subsist between the king and his subjects. The king of Poland, even at his consecration, and in swearing to observe the *pacta conventa*, discharges his subjects from their oath of allegiance, in case he should violate the laws of the republic.

He nominates to all places of trust, and confers all honours. Nothing is hereditary in Poland but landed estates, and the rank of nobility.

The sons of a palatine, and of a king, have no claim to the dignities of their father; but there is this essential difference between the king and the republic, that he can take away no office of power after having conferred it; and that the republic has a right to deprive him of the crown, if he should transgress the laws of the state.

The nobility, jealous of their liberty, often sell their votes, and seldom their affections. Scarcely have they elected a king, before they fear his ambition, and cabal against him. The great men whom he has raised, and cannot pull down, often become his enemies, instead of remaining his creatures. Those who are attached to the court are heated by the rest of the nobility, which constantly forms two parties; an inevitable and even necessary division, in countries where they will have kings, and at the same time preserve their liberty.

What concerns the nation is regulated in the states general, which are called diets. These estates are composed of the body of the senate and several gentlemen. The senators are the palatines and the bishops; the second order is

composed of the deputies of the particular diets of each palatinate. The president of these great assemblies is the archbishop of Gnesna, primate of Poland, vice-roy of the kingdom in the interregnum, and the highest person of the state next to the king. It rarely happens that Poland has any cardinal but himself, because the Roman purple giving no precedency in the senate, a bishop, being a cardinal, would be obliged either to take his seat as senator, or renounce the solid rights of the dignity he is entitled to in his country, to support the pretensions of a foreign honour.

These diets by the laws of the kingdom are to be held alternately in Poland and Lithuania. The deputies often decide their affairs sword in hand, like the old Sarmatæ, from whom they are descended; and sometimes too, overwhelmed in drunkenness, a vice unknown to the Sarmatæ. Every gentleman deputed to the states-general enjoys the right which the popular tribunes had at Rome, of opposing themselves to the laws of the senate. One single gentleman, who says, I protest, by that single expression puts a stop to the unanimous resolution of all the rest; and if

he quits the place where the diet is held, they are then obliged to break up.

For the disorders arising from this law they provide a remedy still more dangerous. Poland is seldom without two factions. Unanimity in the diet being therefore impossible, each party forms confederacies, in which they decide by plurality of voices, without any regard to the protests of the lesser number. These assemblies, uncountenanced by law, but authorized by custom, are made in the king's name, though often against his consent and interest; almost in the same manner as the league in France made use of the name of Henry III. for his overthrow; and as in England, the parliament, which brought Charles the First to the scaffold, began by setting his majesty's name at the head of all the resolutions taken to destroy him. When the troubles are ended, it then belongs to the general diet to confirm or disannul the acts of these confederacies. One diet can also disannul whatever has been done by that which preceded it, for the same reason that in monarchical states a king can abolish the laws of his predecessors, and even his own.

The nobility, which make the laws of the republic, likewise constitute its strength. They appear on horseback upon great occasions, and can form a corps of above a hundred thousand men. This great army, called Pospolite, moves with difficulty, and is ill governed ; the scarcity of provisions and forage makes it impossible for them to subsist long together ; they want discipline, subordination, and experience ; but the love of liberty, by which they are animated, makes them always formidable.

They may be conquered, or dispersed, or even held for a time in bondage, but they soon shake off the yoke ; they compare themselves to reeds, which a storm bends to the ground, and which rise again as soon as it is calm. From this circumstance they have no fortified places ; they will be themselves the only bulwarks of the republic : they never suffer their king to build a fort, lest he should employ it less for their defence than oppression. Their country is entirely open, except two or three frontier places ; so that in any of their wars, either among themselves or with foreigners, if they resolve to sustain a siege, they

are obliged to raise hasty fortifications of earth, repair the old half ruined walls, enlarge ditches almost filled up, and the town is taken before the entrenchments are finished.

The pospolite is not always on horseback to guard the country, they mount only by order of the diets, or sometimes by the single order of the king in extreme dangers.

The usual guard of Poland is an army always maintained at the expence of the republic. It consists of two bodies, under two different grand generals. The first body is that of Poland, and should consist of six and thirty thousand men; the second, to the number of twelve thousand, is that of Lithuania. The two grand generals are independent of each other; and though nominated by the king, they never give an account of their operations to any but the republic, and have a supreme authority over their troops. The colonels are absolute masters of their regiments, and they are to procure subsistence, and pay their soldiers as they can. But as they are seldom paid themselves, they lay waste the country, and ruin the husbandmen to satisfy their own and

their troops avidity. The Polish lords appear in these armies with more magnificence than in their towns, and their tents are more splendid than their houses. The horse, which makes two thirds of the army, is almost all composed of gentlemen, and is remarkable for the beauty of the horses, and the richness of their accoutrements and harness.

Their gens d'armes especially, which are distinguished into houssards and pancernes, march always attended by several valets, leading their horses, whose bridles are ornamented with plates and studs of silver, embroidered saddles, saddle-bows, gilt stirrups, and sometimes massive silver stirrups, with large housings, trailing, after the manner of the Turks, whose magnificence the Poles imitate as much as they can.

But how gorgeous soever the cavalry may appear, the foot were wretched and ragged, ill-clothed and ill-armed, without proper furniture, or any thing uniform, at least till towards the year 1710; and yet these foot, which resemble the vagabond Tartars, support hunger and cold, fatigue and all the weight of war, with incredible resolution.



One may still observe in the Polish soldiers the character of the ancient Sarmatæ their ancestors, as little discipline, the same fury in assault, the same readiness to run away and return to the battle, and the same cruelty in slaughter when they are victorious.

The king of Poland at first flattered himself that in his necessity these two armies would fight for him, that the Polish *pospolite* would arm at his orders, and that all these forces joined to his Saxon subjects and Moscovite allies, would make a body, before which the small number of the Swedes would not venture to appear: but he saw himself almost on a sudden deprived of these succours by the very care that he had taken to have them all together.

Accustomed in his hereditary dominions to absolute power, he too readily supposed he could govern Poland like Saxony. The beginning of his reign raised malcontents; his first proceedings provoked the party who had opposed his election, and alienated almost all the rest. The Poles murmured to see their towns filled with Saxon garrisons and their frontiers with troops. This

nation, far more jealous of maintaining their own liberty than solicitous to disturb their neighbours, did not look upon the war of king Augustus with Sweden, and the irruption in Livonia, as an enterprize advantageous to the republic. A free nation is not easily deceived in regard to its true interests. The Poles saw that if this war, undertaken without their consent, should prove unsuccessful, their country, lying open on all sides, would become a prey to the king of Sweden; and if it should succeed, they would be subjugated by their own king, who, being then master of Livonia as well as Saxony, would shut up Poland between those two countries. In this alternative, either of becoming slaves to the king whom they had elected, or of being ravaged by Charles XII. who was justly incensed, they only raised a clamour against the war, which they judged to be rather against themselves than against Sweden. They looked upon the Saxons and Moscovites as the instruments of their chains. Upon the king of Sweden's defeating all that had opposed his passage, and advancing with a victorious army into

the heart of Lithuania, they loudly exclaimed against their sovereign, and with the less reserve, because he was unfortunate.

Lithuania was then divided into two parties, that of the princes Sapieha and Oginsky. These two factions, began by private quarrels, had degenerated into a civil war. The king of Sweden drew over to his interest the prince Sapieha, and Oginsky, ill supported by the Saxons, saw his party almost annihilated. The Lithuanian army, which these troubles and want of money had reduced to a small number, was in part dispersed by the conqueror. The few who adhered to the king of Poland were separated into small bodies of wandering troops, which over-ran the country, and subsisted by plunder, Augustus beheld nothing in Lithuania but the impotence of his own party, the hatred of his subjects, and an army conducted by an incensed, victorious and implacable young king.

There was indeed an army in Poland, but instead of six and thirty thousand men, the number prescribed by the laws, it was hardly eighteen

thousand. Nor was it only ill paid and ill armed, but its generals were undetermined what course they should take.

The king's only resource was to order the nobility to follow him: but he durst not expose himself to a refusal, which would have too plainly discovered, and consequently increased his weakness.

In this state of trouble and uncertainty all the palatinates of the kingdom demanded a diet of the king; in like manner as in England in times of difficulty all the bodies of the state present addresses to the king, to desire him to convene parliament. Augustus stood more in need of an army than a diet, where the actions of kings are examined. He was obliged however to call one, that he might not exasperate the nation beyond redemption. A diet was therefore appointed to meet at Warsaw on the second of December 1701. He soon perceived that the power of Charles XII. was at least equal to his own in that assembly. Those who adhered to the Sapieha, the Lubomirsky, and their friends, the palatine Leczinsky, treasurer of the crown,

who owed his fortune to Augustus, and above all the partizans of the princes Sobiesky, were all secretly attached to the king of Sweden.

The most considerable of the partisans, and the most dangerous enemy the king of Poland had, was cardinal Radjousky, archbishop of Gnesna, primate of the kingdom, and president of the diet. He was a man full of artifice and impenetrable conduct; entirely governed by an ambitious woman, whom the Swedes termed *Madame la Cardinale*, who never ceased urging him to intrigue and faction. King John Sobiesky, Augustus's predecessor, had formerly made him bishop of Wamerlandt, and vice-chancellor of the kingdom. Radjousky, whilst a private bishop, obtained the cardinal's hat by the same king's favour. This dignity soon opened him the way to the primacy; and thus, uniting in his person whatever could influence others, he was in a condition to attempt every thing with impunity.

Upon the death of John, he used his utmost endeavours to place prince James Sobiesky upon the throne; but the torrent of hatred they bore

to the father, great as he was, set aside the son. The cardinal primate then joined with the abbe de Polignac, the French ambassador, to give the crown to the prince of Conty, who was in reality elected; but the money and troops of Saxony got the better of his negotiations. He at last suffered himself to be drawn into the party, which crowned the elector of Saxony, and waited with impatience for an opportunity to sow division between the nation and the new king.

The victories of Charles XII. protector of prince James Sobiesky, the civil war of Lithuania, the general disaffection of all minds to king Augustus, gave the cardinal hopes that the time was now come when he might send back Augustus into Saxony, and open to the son of king John the way to the throne. This prince, formerly the innocent object of the Poles aversion, was now become their darling, from the time that king Augustus lost their favour; but he durst not then indulge the idea of so great a revolution; and yet the cardinal had insensibly laid the foundations of it.

He at first seemed desirous of reconciling the

king with the republic. He sent circular letters, apparently dictated by a spirit of concord and charity, customary and well known snares, but such as never fail to succeed. He wrote a pathetic letter to the king of Sweden, conjuring him in the name of him, whom all christians equally adore, to give peace to Poland and her king. Charles XII. answered the cardinal's intentions more than his words. In the mean time he remained in the grand dutchy of Lithuania with his victorious army, declaring that he would not disturb the diet; that he made war against Augustus and the Saxons, and not against Poland; and that far from designing any thing against the republic, he came to rescue it from oppression. These letters and these answers were to be made public. Emissaries, who were continually passing and repassing between the cardinal and count Piper, and the secret assemblies held at the prelate's house, were the springs that set the diet in motion. They proposed to send an embassy to Charles XII. and required with one consent, of the king, that he should bring no more Moscovites upon their frontiers, and send back his Saxon troops.

The ill fortune of Augustus had already done what the diet demanded. The league secretly concluded with the Moscovites at Birzen, had become as insignificant as it at first had appeared formidable. He was far from being able to send the czar the fifty thousand Germans he had promised to raise in the empire. The czar himself, a dangerous neighbour to Poland, was at that time not very eager to assist, with all his force, a divided kingdom, whence he was in hopes of reaping some spoils. He contented himself with sending twenty thousand Moscovites into Lithuania, where they did more mischief than the Swedes, continually flying before the conqueror, and ravaging the lands of the Poles, till at last being pursued by the Swedish generals, and finding nothing more to pillage, they returned in shoals to their own country. As for the scattered remains of the Saxon army beaten at Riga, king Augustus sent them to winter and recruit in Saxony, that this sacrifice, however involuntary, might soften the rage of the incensed Poles.

The war was then changed into intrigues. The diet was divided into almost as many factions as



there were palatines. One day, the interests of king Augustus prevailed, and the next they were proscribed. Every individual cried out for liberty and justice, but not one knew what it was either to be free or just. The time was spent in secret cabal and public harangue. The diet neither knew what it would, nor what it ought, to do. Great companies have scarcely ever taken proper counsels in times of civil broils, because the bold men in such assemblies are generally factious, and the men of probity timorous. The diet broke up in disorder on the 17th of February, 1702, after three months of cabal and indecision. The senators, who are the palatines and bishops, remained at Warsaw, The senate of Poland has the right of making provisional laws, which the diets seldom disannul. This body being not so numerous and used to business, was far less tumultuous, and came to a more speedy determination.

They agreed to send the embassy, as proposed in the diet, to the king of Sweden; that the pospolite should take horse, and be ready upon all emergencies. They made several regulations to ap-

pease the troubles in Lithuania, and still more to diminish the king's authority, though less to be apprehended than that of Charles.

Augustus chose rather to receive hard laws from his conqueror than his subjects. He determined to ask peace of the king of Sweden, and would have concluded a secret treaty with him. He was obliged to conceal this step from the senate, whom he looked upon as an enemy still more untractable. The affair was delicate, he entrusted it wholly to the countess of Koningsmark, a Swedish lady of high birth, to whom he was then attached. She it was whose brother was renowned for his unhappy death, and whose son commanded the armies of France with such signal and glorious success. This lady, who was celebrated for her wit and beauty, was more capable than any minister whatever to succeed in a negotiation. Moreover, the property she had in the states of Charles XII. and her long residence at his court, furnished her with a plausible pretence for waiting upon him. She went therefore to the Swedish camp in Lithuania, and first applied to count Piper, who too inadvertently pro-

mised her an audience of his master. The countess, among those perfections which rendered her one of the most amiable persons in Europe, had the singular talent of speaking the languages of several countries which she had never seen, with as much propriety as though she had been born in them. She would sometimes amuse herself with writing French verses, which might easily have been mistaken for the composition of a native of Versailles. She made some on Charles XII. which deserve to be recorded. She introduced the fabulous gods, all of whom commended his different virtues. The piece concluded thus:

The hero's acts while other gods proclaim,  
And praise and promise him immortal fame;  
Silent sit Bacchus, and the queen of love.

All her wit and charms were lost upon such a man as the king of Sweden, who constantly refused to see her. As he frequently rode out on horseback, she resolved to throw herself in his way. Accordingly, she one day met him in a very narrow road, and alighted from her coach as soon as she saw him. The king made her a bow, and without saying a single word, turned his

horse's head, and rode back in an instant: so that the countess of Koningsmark gained no other advantage from her journey, but the satisfaction of believing that the king of Sweden feared nobody but her.

The king of Poland was now obliged to throw himself into the arms of the senate. He made them two proposals by the palatine of Marienbourg, the one that they should leave the army of the republic at his disposal, and he would pay it two quarters in advance out of his own revenue; the other, that they should allow him to bring twelve thousand Saxons back into Poland. The cardinal primate gave an answer as severe, as was the refusal of the king of Sweden. He told the palatine of Marienbourg in the name of the assembly, that they were resolved to send an embassy to Charles XII. and that it would be to no purpose to introduce the Saxons into Poland.

The king in this extremity was desirous of preserving at least the appearance of the royal authority. He sent one of his chamberlains to Charles, to know of him, where and how his

Swedish majesty would receive the embassy of the king his master and the republic. It had been unhappily neglected to demand a passport for his chamberlain to the Swedes. The king of Sweden instead of giving him audience, threw him into prison, saying, that he expected to receive an embassy from the republic, and not from king Augustus. This infringement of the law of nations could only be authorised by the law of the strongest.

Charles then having garrisoned some towns, behind him, in Lithuania, advanced beyond Grodno, a place famous in Europe for the diets held there, but ill built, and worse fortified.

At some miles from Grodno, he met the embassy of the republic ; it consisted of five senators. They began by desiring him to regulate a ceremonial which the king was totally unacquainted with : and required that the republic should be styled serenissime, and that the king's carriages and senators should be sent in procession before them. They received for answer, that the republic should be styled illustrious, and not serenissime ; that the king never used a

coach, and that he was attended by many officers but no senators ; that a lieutenant-general should be sent to meet them, and that they might come upon their own horses.

Charles XII. received them in his tent, with an appearance of military pomp which he had always disclaimed. Their conversation was full of caution and obscurity. It was observed that they feared Charles XII. and had no great partiality for Augustus ; but that they were ashamed to take the crown from the king of their choice by the order of a foreigner. Nothing was settled, and Charles XII. gave them to understand that he would make up his mind in Warsaw.

His march was preceded by a manifesto, with which the cardinal and his party inundated Poland in eight days. By this paper Charles invited all the Poles to join their injuries with his, and pretended to convince them that their interest and his were the same. They were notwithstanding very different, but the manifesto, supported by a great party, by the disorder of the senate, and the approach of the conqueror, made very strong impressions. They were obliged to

acknowledge Charles their protector, since he was resolved to be so, and it was well for them that he contented himself with that title.

The senators who opposed Augustus, published the declaration aloud even before his face, and his few adherents kept silence. At last, when they heard that Charles was advancing with rapid strides, they all prepared, in confusion, to depart; the cardinal left Warsaw one of the first; and the major part followed hastily; some to their own country seats to see how things would terminate, and others to rouse their friends. There remained with the king only the ambassadors of the emperor and the czar, the pope's nuncio, and some few bishops and palatines who were attached to his fortune. He was forced to fly, and nothing yet had been decided in his favour. Before his departure he hastened to hold a council with this small number of senators, who still represented the senate. How zealous soever they were for his service, they were still Poles, and had all conceived so great an aversion to the Saxon troops, that they durst not allow him the liberty of bringing above six thousand of them for his

defence ; and they further voted that those six thousand men should be commanded by the grand general of Poland, and sent home immediately after the conclusion of a peace. As to the armies of the republic, they left them at his disposal.

After this consultation the king left Warsaw, too weak to oppose the enemy, and little satisfied with the conduct of his own party. He instantly promulgated general orders for assembling the Pospolite, and armies which were little more than a bare name. There was no hope in Lithuania, where the Swedes were posted. The Polish army reduced to a small number of troops, wanted arms, provisions, and affection. The greatest part of the nobility intimidated, irresolute, or ill-disposed, confined themselves to their own estates. Their king in vain, though authorised by the laws of the state, ordered, under pain of death, every gentleman to appear on horseback, and follow him. It was now become a dispute whether they owed him obedience. His chief dependence was upon the troops of his electorate, where the form of government being entirely absolute, left him under no apprehensions of being



disobeyed. He had already given private orders for 12,000 Saxons, who were upon their march, to advance with all possible speed. He farther recalled the eight thousand he had promised to the emperor to assist him in his wars against France, and which, in the necessity he was reduced to, he was obliged to withdraw. This introduction of so many Saxons into Poland, was a sure means of setting every one against him, as it was a violation also of the law made by his own party, which allowed him but 6,000; but he well knew, that if he were conqueror, they durst not complain; and if he were conquered, they would never forgive his having introduced even six thousand. Whilst these soldiers were marching up in troops, and he was flying from palatine to palatine to assemble the nobility who adhered to him, the king of Sweden at last arrived before Warsaw, on the 15th of May 1702. The gates were opened to him upon the first summons. He sent away the Polish garrison, dismissed the city guard, posted his own guards throughout, ordered the inhabitants to bring in their arms, and content with having disarmed, without wishing to exas-

perate them, he demanded no more than a contribution of an hundred thousand francs. King Augustus was then getting together his forces at Cracow, and was much surprised to see the cardinal primate one of the company. That man whose heart burnt within him to finish the work he had begun, pretended to preserve his decency of character to the last, and to dethrone the king with every outward respect. He told him that the king of Sweden appeared disposed to a reasonable accommodation, and humbly begged leave that he might attend him. King Augustus granted him what he could not refuse, that is, the liberty to do him every injury in his power.

The cardinal primate hastened to the king of Sweden, before whom he had never yet ventured to present himself. He saw his majesty at Praag, not far from Warsaw, but without the ceremonies which had been used towards the ambassadors of the republic. He found the conqueror clad in a coat of coarse blue cloth, with brass gilt buttons, jack-boots, and buff-skin gloves that reached up to his elbows, in a room without hangings, in company with the duke of Holstein his brother-

in-law, count Piper his prime-minister, and several general officers. The king advanced some steps to meet the cardinal, and they had a conference together standing, of about a quarter of an hour, after which Charles put an end to it by saying aloud I will never give the Poles peace, till they have elected another king. The cardinal, who expected such a declaration, immediately communicated it to all the palatinates, assuring them how much he was concerned and at the same time of the necessity they were in to comply with the conqueror.

Upon this news the king of Poland saw plainly, that he must either lose his crown or preserve it by arms ; and he used his utmost efforts for the important stake. All his Saxon troops were arrived from the frontiers of Saxony. The nobility of the palatinate of Cracow, where he still remained, came in a body to offer their services. He in person exhorted every one of these gentlemen to remember the oaths they had taken ; they assured him that they would spill the last drop of their blood in his defence. Strengthened by their succour, and the troops called the army of the

crown, he for the first time went in person to seek the king of Sweden ; and he was not long in finding him, for he too was advancing towards Cracow.

The two kings met on the 19th of July 1702, on a spacious plain near Clissau between Warsaw and Cracow. Augustus had nearly four and twenty thousand men, and Charles XII. not above twelve thousand. The battle began with the discharge of artillery. Upon the first volley, which was given by the Saxons, the duke of Holstein, who commanded the Swedish horse, a young prince of great courage and virtue, received a cannon ball in the loins. The king enquired if he was dead, and was told that he was ; he made no answer, but tears fell from his eyes : he covered his face, for a moment, with his hands, then, on a sudden, clapping spurs to his horse, he rushed full speed into the thickest of the enemy, at the head of his guards.

The king of Poland did all that could be expected from a prince who fought for his crown. He thrice led up his troops in person to the charge ; but he had only his Saxon troops to sup-

port him, all the Poles forming the left wing having, to a man, fled early in the battle, some from fear and others from inclination. The ascendancy of Charles XII. prevailed, and he gained a complete victory. The enemy's camp, colours, and artillery, and Augustus's military chest, fell into his hands. He made no stay upon the field of battle, but marched straight to Cracow, in pursuit of the king of Poland, who fled before him.

The citizens of Cracow were bold enough to shut their gates against the conqueror. He had them forced open; the garrison durst not fire a shot, and were driven by the whip and cane into the castle, which the king entered along with them. An artillery officer was bold enough to prepare to apply the match to a gun when Charles made at him, and snatched it out of his hand. The Swedish regiments were billeted at free quarters on the citizens, and a contribution of one hundred thousand rix dollars levied on the city. Count de Steinbock who was appointed governor, having heard that some valuables had been concealed in the tombs of the kings of Poland, in St. Nicholas' church, had them opened; but they were

found to contain only a few gold and silver ornaments belonging to the church. Part of them were taken away, and Charles XII. went so far as to send a gold chalice to a church in Sweden ; an event that would certainly have raised the Polish catholics against him could any thing have withstood the terror of his arms.

He departed from Cracow in the full resolution of pursuing Augustus without intermission. He had not gone many miles from the city when his horse fell with him, and broke his thigh. They were obliged to carry him back to Cracow, where he was confined in bed for six weeks in the hands of his surgeons. This accident gave Augustus time to breathe a little. He caused it immediately to be spread throughout Poland and Germany, that Charles XII. was killed by his fall. This false report, which was credited for some time, filled all men's minds with astonishment and uncertainty. In this short interval he assembled all the orders of the kingdom at Marienbourg, and then at Lublin, which had before been called together at Sendomir. The assembly was large, as few of the palatinates refused to send their depu-

ties thither. He regained almost all their hearts by presents and promises, and that affability which is so necessary to absolute kings to win their subjects' affections, and to elective kings to preserve them. The diet was soon undeceived concerning the false rumours of the king of Sweden's death ; but that great body was already put in motion, and suffered itself to be carried along by the impulse it had received. All its members swore to continue faithful to their king ; so subject are bodies to fluctuate.

The cardinal primate himself, still affecting attachment to king Augustus, came to the diet of Lublin kissed the king's hand, and made no scruple to take the oath with the rest. This oath consisted in swearing, that they had never attempted, nor would ever attempt any thing against Augustus. The king excused the cardinal from the first part of the oath, and the prelate blushed as he swore to the rest. The determination of this diet was, that the republic of Poland should maintain an army of fifty thousand men at their own expence for the service of their prince ; that they should allow the Swedes

six weeks' time to declare whether they intended peace or war, and the same term to the princes Sapieha, the first authors of the troubles in Lithuania, to come in and beg pardon of the king of Poland.

Pending these deliberations Charles XII. having recovered his wound, overturned all before him. Always firm in his resolution of forcing the Poles themselves to dethrone their king, by the intrigues of the cardinal primate, he caused a new assembly to be called together at Warsaw to oppose that of Lublin. His generals represented to him that the affair might thus be protracted to a tedious length, and at last evaporate in delays ; that during this time the Moscovites were daily skirmishing with the troops he had left behind in Livonia and Ingria ; that the result was not always favourable to the Swedes, and that his presence there, in all probability, would very soon become necessary. Charles, who was as immovable in his projects as rapid in his actions, answered, Were I to stay here fifty years, I would not leave the place 'till I had dethroned the king of Poland.



He left the assembly of Warsaw to dispute by speeches and writings with that of Lublin, and seek for precedents to justify their proceedings in the laws of the kingdom ; laws constantly equivocal, interpreted by both parties according to their inclinations, and rendered incontestible alone by success. For himself, having augmented his victorious troops with six thousand horse and eight thousand foot, which he received from Sweden, he marched against the remains of the Saxon army which he had beaten at Clissau, and which had gained time to rally and recruit, whilst the fall from his horse had confined him to his bed. This army shunned his approach, and retired towards Prussia to the north-west of Warsaw. The river Bug was between him and his enemies. Charles swam over it at the head of his cavalry, whilst the foot went to seek a ford somewhat higher. On May 1, 1703, he came up with the Saxons at a place called Pultusk. They were commanded by general Stenau, and in number above ten thousand. The king of Sweden in his precipitate march had taken no more along with him, confident that a less number would have sufficed.

The terror of his arms was so great, that one half of the Saxon army fled at his approach, without staying for the battle. General Stenau stood firm for a while with two regiments; but the moment after, he was himself drawn into the general flight of his army, which was dispersed before it was conquered. The Swedes did not take a thousand prisoners, nor kill six hundred men, having more difficulty in pursuing than defeating them.

Augustus, who had nothing left him, but the scattered remains of the Saxons, beaten on all sides, retired in haste to Thorn, an antient city of royal Prussia, situate upon the Vistula, and under the protection of Poland. Charles immediately prepared to besiege it. The king of Poland, not thinking himself secure there, retired, and searched every place in Poland where he was still likely to collect any soldiers, and into which the Swedes had not penetrated on their way. In the mean time Charles, who made nothing of so many rapid marches, swimming over rivers, and hurrying along with his foot mounted behind his cavalry, was not able to bring up his cannon,

before Thorn ; but was forced to wait until it was sent from Sweden by sea.

During this delay, he took up his quarters within some miles of the city, and would often advance too near the ramparts, to reconnoitre. The plain dress he always wore was of greater service to him in these dangerous excursions than he had ever imagined. It prevented his being taken notice of, and pointed out by the enemy, as a person to be fired at. One day having approached very near, with one of his generals named Lieven, who was dressed in blue trimmed with gold, and fearing that the general might be too conspicuous, he ordered him to walk behind, moved, by that, to him, so natural magnanimity, which prevented him from reflecting that he exposed his own life to manifest danger to save that of his subject.

Lieven too late discerning his error in having put on a remarkable dress, which exposed also those who were with him, and fearing equally for the king in whatever place he was, hesitated whether to obey him ; in the moment while this contest lasted, the king took him by the arm, stood

before, and covered him ; at the same instant a cannon ball, which came in flank, struck the general dead, upon that very spot, which the king had scarce quitted. The death of this man, killed directly in his stead, and because of his endeavours to save him, contributed not a little to confirm him in the notion he had ever held of absolute predestination, and made him believe, that his fate, which protected him in so singular a manner, reserved him for the execution of greater things.

Every thing succeeded with him, and his negotiations and arms were equally fortunate. He was in a manner present throughout all Poland ; for his grand mareschal Renschild was in the heart of those dominions with a great body of the army. Near thirty thousand Swedes under different generals, dispersed towards the north and the east upon the frontiers of Moscovy, withstood the efforts of the whole empire of Russia ; and Charles was in the west, at the other end of Poland, heading his choicest troops.

The king of Denmark, tied down by the treaty of Travendal, which his weakness hindered him

from breaking, continued silent. This prudent monarch dared not show his vexation, at seeing the king of Sweden so near his dominions. Further towards the south-west between the rivers Elbe and Weser was the dutchy of Bremen, the last territory of the antient conquests of the Swedes, filled with strong garrisons, which opened to the conqueror a free passage into Saxony and the empire. Thus from the German ocean almost to the mouth of the Boristhenes, which makes the breadth of Europe, and to the gates of Moscow, all was in consternation, and at every moment, expecting a complete revolution. His vessels, masters of the Baltic, were employed in transporting prisoners from Poland into his own country. Sweden alone was calm, in the midst of these great emotions, tasting the sweets of a profound peace, and enjoying the glory of her king, without bearing the weight of it; since his victorious troops were paid and maintained at the expence of the conquered.

In this general silence of the north before the arms of Charles XII. the city of Dantzic ventured to offend him. Fourteen frigates and forty trans-

ports were bringing to the king a supply of six thousand men, with cannon and ammunition to finish the siege of Thorn. These succours must necessarily pass up the Vistula. At the mouth of this river stands Dantzic, a rich and free city, enjoying, with Elbing and Thorn, the same privileges in Poland, as the imperial towns in Germany. Its liberty had been attacked in turn, by the Danes, Swedes, and some German princes, and was preserved only by the jealousy which these powers had of each other. Count Steinbock, one of the Swedish generals, assembled the magistrates in the king's name, demanding a passage for the troops, and some ammunition. The magistrates with an imprudence usual in those who treat with their superiors in strength, durst neither absolutely refuse, nor expressly grant his demands. General Steinbock made them give by force more than he had asked ; and farther exacted from the town a contribution of an hundred thousand crowns by way of recompence for their imprudent denial. At last the reinforcements, cannon, and ammunition being arrived before Thorn, the siege was begun on the 22d of September.

Robel, governor of the place, defended it, a month, with a garrison of five thousand men. At the end of that time it was forced to surrender at discretion. The garrison was made prisoners of war, and sent into Sweden. Robel was presented to the king unarmed. His majesty, who never lost an opportunity of honouring merit in his enemies, gave him a sword with his own hand, made him a considerable present in money, and sent him away upon his parole. This poor and petty town was condemned to pay forty thousand crowns; an excessive contribution for such a place.

Elbing, a town, built upon an arm of the Vistula, founded by the Teutonic knights, and also annexed to Poland, did not take a proper warning by the Dantzicers' error, but hesitated too long about giving passage to the Swedish troops. It consequently suffered more severely than Dantzic itself. Charles entered it on the 13th of December, at the head of four thousand men, with fixed bayonets. The terrified inhabitants fell upon their knees in the streets, and begged for mercy. He disarmed them all, lodged his

soldiers in their houses, and then, having convened the magistrates, obliged them to raise, that very day, a contribution of two hundred and sixty thousand crowns. There were in the town two hundred pieces of cannon, and four hundred thousand weight of gun-powder, which he seized. The gaining a victory would not have been of so much consequence. All these successes were forerunners to the dethroning of king Augustus.

The cardinal had scarcely taken the oath that he would attempt nothing against his king, than he went to the assembly at Warsaw, but still under the pretence of peace. He was attended by three thousand soldiers raised upon his own estate, but talking of nothing but concord and obedience. At last he threw off the mask, and on the 14th of February 1704, declared in the name of the assembly, Augustus, elector of Saxony, unfit to wear the crown of Poland. They then pronounced, with one voice, that the throne was vacant. It was the will of the king of Sweden, and, of course, that of the diet, that prince James Sobiesky should be seated on the throne of king John, his father. James Sobiesky was then at



Breslau in Silesia, waiting with impatience for the crown, which his father had worn. As he was one day hunting at some leagues from Breslau, with prince Constantine, one of his brothers, thirty Saxon horsemen, sent privately by king Augustus, broke suddenly upon them from a neighbouring wood, surrounded the two princes, and carried them off without resistance. Fresh horses stood ready at a distance, on which they were immediately carried to Leipsick, where they were closely confined. This step at once deranged all the measures of Charles, the cardinal, and the assembly at Warsaw.

Fortune, which sports with crowned heads, left king Augustus, almost at the same time, on the point of being taken himself. He was at dinner within three leagues of Cracow, relying upon an advanced guard posted at some distance, when general Renschild came suddenly upon him, after having carried off the guard. The king of Poland had but just time to get on horseback, with ten others. General Renschild pursued him four days, in momentary expectation of seizing him. The king fled to Sendomir, whither the Swedish

general followed him; and it was by singular good fortune that he made his escape.

In the mean time the king's party treated that of the cardinal, and were reciprocally treated by them, as traitors to their country. The army of the crown was divided between the two factions. Augustus, forced, at last, to accept the Moscovite succour, repented that he had not applied to them sooner. At one time he marched into Saxony, where his forces were exhausted; and at another returned to Poland, where they durst not assist him. On a different side, the king of Sweden, calm and victorious, in point of fact, reigned in Poland.

Count Piper, who was as much a politician as his master was a hero, laid hold of the opportunity to advise Charles XII. to take upon himself the crown of Poland. He represented to him how easily it might be done with a victorious army, and a powerful party in the heart of a kingdom, which he had already brought under subjection. He tempted him with the title of defender of the Evangelical religion, a name which flattered the ambition of Charles. It was easy for

him, he said, to do in Poland what Gustavus Vasa had done in Sweden; to introduce Lutheranism, and break the chains of the people, now slaves to the nobility and clergy. Charles gave way to the temptation for a moment; but glory was the idol to which he sacrificed his interest, and the pleasure he would have had in taking Poland from the pope. He told count Piper that he chose rather to give kingdoms away than gain them; and added, smiling, you were cut out for the minister of an Italian prince.

Charles still laid near Thorn, in that part of Royal Prussia which belongs to Poland; he thence observed all that was transacting at Warsaw, and kept the neighbouring powers in awe. Prince Alexander, brother of the two Sobieskys who were carried off in Silesia, came to demand vengeance. The king promised it him the more readily, as he judged it easy, and that he should be thereby revenged himself. But being impatient to give Poland a king, he offered to prince Alexander that throne which fortune seemed to deny to his brother. He had not the least expectation of a refusal. Prince Alexander declared

that nothing should ever induce him to take advantage of his elder brother's misfortunes. The king of Sweden, count Piper, all his friends, and especially the young palatine of Posnania, Stanislaus Leczinsky, pressed him to accept of it. He continued inflexible. The neighbouring princes learnt with astonishment the unprecedented refusal, and knew not whom they should admire most; a king of Sweden, who at twenty-two years of age gave away the crown of Poland, or a prince Alexander, who refused to accept it.

## BOOK III.

*Stanislaus Leczinsky chosen King of Poland. Death of the Cardinal Primate. Fine Retreat of General Shullembourg. Exploits of the Czar. Foundation of Petersburg. Battle of Frawenstad. Charles enters Saxony. Peace of Altranstad. Augustus abdicates the Crown in favour of Stanislaus. General Patkul, the Czar's Plenipotentiary, broken upon the Wheel and quartered. Charles receives the Ambassadors of all the Princes in Saxony, and goes alone to Dresden to visit Augustus, before his Departure.*

YOUNG Stanislaus Leczinsky was then deputed by the assembly at Warsaw to give an account to the king of Sweden of the several differences which had arisen among them at the time prince James was carried away. Stanislaus had an engaging aspect, full of bravery and sweetness, with an air of probity and openness, which is doubtless the first of all outward advantages, and adds greater weight to words than eloquence itself. The discretion with which he spoke of king

Augustus, the assembly, the cardinal primate, and the different interests by which Poland was divided, made an impression upon Charles XII. King Stanislaus did me the honour to relate that he said, in Latin, to the king of Sweden, How shall we make an election if the two princes James and Constantine Sobiesky, are captives? And that Charles made answer: How can the republic be set free without an election? This conversation, and this alone, was the sole intrigue which placed Stanislaus on the throne. Charles designedly prolonged the conference, that he might the better sound the genius of the young deputy. After the audience he said aloud, that he had not seen a man so fit to conciliate all parties. He immediately made enquiry into the character of the palatine Leczinsky. He knew that he was a person of great courage, and inured to fatigue; that he constantly laid upon a kind of straw mattress, requiring no service of his domestics in regard to his person; that he was temperate to a degree little known in that climate; economical, adored by his vassals and the only nobleman perhaps in Poland who had friends, at

a time when no regard was paid to any ties but those of interest and faction.

This character, which in many particulars resembled his own, decided him at once. After the conference, he said in a voice to be heard by all, that is a man who shall always be my friend. And it was soon perceived that those words meant, That man shall be a king.

When the primate of Poland found that Charles XII. had nominated the palatine Leczinsky nearly in a similar manner to Alexander's nomination of Abdalominus, he hastened to the king of Sweden to endeavour to change his resolution, as he wished the crown to fall to Lubomirsky. But what objection have you, said the king, to make against him? Sir, said the primate, he is too young. The king answered drily, he is much about my age, turned his back upon the prelate, and immediately dispatched count Hoorn to signify to the assembly at Warsaw, that they must elect a king in five days, and that their choice must be Stanislaus Leczinsky. Count Hoorn arrived upon the 7th of July, and fixed the day of election for the 12th, as if he had or-

dered the movement of a battalion. The cardinal primate, disappointed of the fruit of so many intrigues, returned to the assembly, where he left no stone unturned to make the election, wherein he had no share, prove abortive. But the king of Sweden coming himself incognito to Warsaw, he was obliged to be silent. All that the primate could do was, to absent himself from the election; he was reduced to an inefficient neutrality; as he could not oppose the conqueror, and would not second him.

On Saturday the 12th of July, the day appointed for the election, about three in the afternoon, the assembly met at Colo, the place designed for the ceremony, and the bishop of Posnania presided instead of the primate. He came attended by a large body of gentlemen of the party. Count Hoorn and two other general officers assisted publicly at the solemnity, as ambassadors extraordinary from Charles to the republic. The session lasted till nine in the evening; and the bishop of Posnania put an end to it by declaring in the name of the diet that Stanislaus was elected king of Poland, every hat was



, thrown up in the air, and the noise of the acclamations quite drowned the cries of the opponents.

It was of no service to the cardinal primate, and those who had a mind to continue neuter, that they had absented themselves from the election. They were all forced the next day to come and pay homage to the new king. The greatest mortification they had was, that they were obliged to wait upon him at the king of Sweden's quarters. His majesty gave all the honours to the king he had made, due to a king of Poland; and to add greater weight to his new dignity, assigned him money and troops.

Charles XII. immediately set out from Warsaw to finish the conquest of Poland. He had fixed the general rendezvous of his army before Leopold, the capital of the great palatinate of Russia, a place considerable in itself, and much more so for the riches it contained. It was thought that it would hold out fifteen days, on account of the fortifications which king Augustus had made there. The conqueror invested it on the 5th of September, and the next day carried it by assault. All who resisted

were put to the sword. The victorious troops, who were now masters of the town, did not disband to run after pillage, notwithstanding the report of the treasures which were in the town, but ranged themselves in order of battle in the great square. There the remains of the garrison came to surrender themselves prisoners of war. The king then proclaimed, by sound of trumpet, that all the inhabitants who had any effects belonging to king Augustus or his adherents, should bring them in person before night-fall, under pain of death. Measures were so well concerted, that few ventured to disobey him, and they brought his majesty four hundred chests filled with gold and silver coin, plate, and other valuables.

The beginning of Stanislaus's reign was almost the same day made remarkable by a very different event. Some affairs which absolutely required his presence had obliged him to continue at Warsaw. He had with him his mother, his wife, and his two daughters. The cardinal primate, the bishop of Posnania, and some great men of Poland, made up his new court. His guards con-

sisted of six thousand Polanders of the army of the crown, lately brought over to his service ; and whose fidelity he had not yet tried. General Hoorn, the governor of the town, had not with him above fifteen hundred Swedes besides. Warsaw was in a state of perfect tranquillity, and Stanislaus intended to leave it in a few days to go to the conquest of Leopold ; when all of a sudden he received information that a numerous army was drawing near to the town. This was king Augustus, who by a fresh effort, and one of the finest marches that ever general made, having eluded the king of Sweden, was coming up with twenty thousand men to fall upon Warsaw, and carry off his rival.

Warsaw was very ill fortified, and the Polish force which defended it not to be relied on. Augustus had spies in the town ; if Stanislaus remained, he was undone. He sent his family therefore into Posnania, under the guard of those Polish troops in whom he could put most confidence. He was apprehensive, that in the general confusion he had lost his second daughter, who was but a year old. She was taken out of the

way by a nurse, and he found her in a horse trough, where she had been left, at a neighbouring village. I heard him state this fact with his own mouth. This was the child, who after the greatest vicissitudes, since became queen of France. Several gentlemen took different roads. The new king went directly to Charles XII. learning early to suffer disgrace, and forced to quit his capital within six weeks after he had been advanced to the sovereignty.

Augustus entered the capital as an incensed and victorious sovereign. The inhabitants, already plundered by the king of Sweden, were still more so by Augustus. The cardinal's palace, and all the houses of the confederaté lords, with all their possessions, both in town and country, were given up to plunder. What was most extraordinary in this transient revolution was, that the pope's nuncio, who came with king Augustus, demanded in his master's name, that the bishop of Posnania should be given up to him, as subject to the jurisdiction of the court of Rome, being a bishop, and favourer of a prince advanced to the throne by Lutheran arms.

The court of Rome, which has always endeavoured to increase its temporal, by means of spiritual power, had long established a kind of jurisdiction in Poland, with the pope's nuncio at its head. These ministers never failed to lay hold of all favourable occasions to extend their power, which was revered by the multitude, though always contested by men of better understanding. They had claimed a right of deciding in all ecclesiastical causes, and had, particularly in troublesome times, usurped several other prerogatives, which they maintained, until about the year 1728, when those abuses, which indeed are never reformed, till altogether intolerable, were removed.

King Augustus, who was very glad to punish the bishop of Posnania without offending against propriety, and at the same time to do an acceptable service to the court of Rome, though he would readily have opposed it upon any other occasion, delivered the Polish prelate over to the nuncio. The bishop, after having seen his palace pillaged, was carried by soldiers to the Italian minister, and thence sent into Saxony, where

he died. Count Hoorn stood the constant fire of the enemy in the castle, in which he had shut himself up; but the place at last being no longer tenable, he surrendered himself prisoner of war, with his fifteen hundred Swedes. This was the first advantage that king Augustus gained, in the torrent of his ill fortune, against the victorious arms of his enemy.

This last effort of Augustus was but the last blaze of a fire that was going out. His troops, which were hastily got together, were either Poles ready to abandon him upon the first disgrace, Saxon recruits who had never yet seen any service, or vagabond Cossacks, more fit to plunder the conquered, than to conquer, all trembling at the mere name of the king of Sweden.

The conqueror, accompanied by king Stanislaus, went in quest of the enemy at the head of his choicest troops. The Saxon army fled before him. The towns for thirty miles round sent him their keys, and no day passed which was not signalized by some advantage. Successes began to grow too familiar to Charles. He said it was

rather hunting than fighting, and complained that he never purchased a victory.

Augustus committed the care of his army, for some time, to count Schullembourg, a very able general; and indeed he stood in need of all his experience at the head of an army under such discouragements. His object was more to preserve his master's troops than to conquer; he acted by stratagem, and the two kings with vigour. He stole marches upon them, seized upon advantageous passes, and sacrificed a few cavalry, to give time, to his foot, to retire with safety. He saved his troops, by masterly retreats, in the face of an enemy from whom it was scarcely possible to obtain any other kind of glories.

Hardly had he reached the palatinate of Posania, imagining that the two kings were above fifty leagues off, than he learnt that they had marched those fifty leagues in nine days. He had but a thousand horse, and eight thousand foot, and was to keep his ground against a superior army, against the name of the king of Sweden, and against the natural fears which so many

defeats had raised in the Saxons. He was ever of opinion, contrary to the German generals, that the foot might stand against horse in an open plain, even without chevaux de frise; and he that day ventured to try it against the victorious cavalry commanded by the two kings, and the most experienced Swedish generals. He posted himself so advantageously, that he could not be surrounded; his first rank bent one knee upon the ground; it was armed with pikes and musquets, the soldiers stood extremely close, and presented to the enemy's horse a kind of bristling rampart of pikes and bayonets; the second rank, bending a little over the shoulders of the first, fired over their heads; and the third standing upright, fired at the same time behind the other two. The Swedes fell with their usual impetuosity upon the Saxons, who waited for them unshaken; the discharge of musketry, the pikes and bayonets, startled the horses, and set them capering instead of advancing. By this means the Swedes made their attack in disorder, and the Saxons defended themselves by keeping their ranks.

He formed an oblong square; and though



he had received five wounds in the engagement, he retired in good order in this form, about midnight, to the small town of Gurau, three leagues from the field of battle. Scarcely had he been allowed time to breathe, in this place, before the two kings appeared suddenly at his heels.

Beyond Gurau, towards the river Oder, was a thick wood, by crossing which the Saxon general saved his fatigued army. The Swedes, without making a pause, pursued him through the wood, advancing, with difficulty, in roads hardly passable by people on foot. The Saxons had not got through the wood above five hours before the Swedish horse. On the other side this forest runs the river Parts, at the foot of a village named Rutsen. Schullembourg had sent forward, in all haste, to get the boats together, and crossed the river with his troops, which were already reduced to half their number. Charles came up by the time Schullembourg had reached the opposite side. Never did a conqueror so sharply pursue his enemy. Schullembourg's reputation depended upon his escape from the king of Sweden, who on his part thought his glory concerned in

taking Schullembourg and the remnant of his army. He lost no time, but swam his horse over the river: thus inclosing the Saxons between the river Parts, and the great river Oder, which had its source in Silesia, and is in this place very deep and rapid.

Schullembourg's destruction appeared inevitable; however, after having sacrificed a few of his troops, he passed the Oder in the night. He thus saved his army; and Charles could not help saying, Schullembourg has conquered us to day.

This Schullembourg was afterwards the Venetian general to whom the republic erected a statue in Corfu, for having defended that bulwark of Italy against the Turks. Republics alone bestow such honours; kings only bestow rewards.

But what was so glorious to Schullembourg was of very little service to king Augustus. He once more abandoned Poland to his enemies, withdrew into Saxony, and hastily repaired the fortifications of Dresden, already, nor without reason, trembling for the capital of his hereditary states.

Thus was Poland subdued by Charles XII.

His generals, after his example, had beaten, in Courland several small bodies of Moscovites, who, ever since the great battle of Narva, had not shewn themselves but in small companies, and made war in those districts like the vagabond Tartars, who plunder, run away, and reappear only to repeat their flight.

Wherever the Swedes were, they thought themselves secure of victory, though but twenty against a hundred. Under these happy auspices Stanislaus prepared for his coronation. The fortune which had given him the election at Warsaw, and had since driven him out, recalled him once again, amid the acclamations of a number of the nobility, whom the fortune of war had attached to him. A diet was appointed, and all other obstacles were removed, the court of Rome alone was disposed to cross it.

It was natural to imagine, that this court would declare in favour of king Augustus, who from a Protestant was turned Roman Catholic to gain the crown in opposition to Stanislaus, who was placed upon the throne by the great enemy of the Romish religion. Clement XI. the

then pope, sent briefs to all the prelates of Poland, and in particular to the cardinal primate, by which he threatened them with excommunication, if they presumed to assist at the consecration of Stanislaus, or form any attempt against the prerogatives of king Augustus.

If these briefs reached the bishops that were at Warsaw, there was cause to apprehend, that some would obey them only through weakness, and the major part would lay hold of the opportunity of being more difficult to be brought over to Stanislaus's interest, in proportion as they became more necessary. All possible precautions were therefore taken to hinder these letters of the pope from being received at Warsaw. A Franciscan received them privately, and undertook to deliver them into the bishop's own hands. He began by presenting one to the suffragan of Chelm. This prelate, who was firm in his attachment to king Stanislaus, carried it to his majesty unopened. The king sent for the monk, and asked him how he dared undertake such a commission? The Franciscan answered, by his general's orders. Stanislaus bid him for the future pay more regard

to the orders of his king, than to those of the general of the Franciscans, and sent him out of the town that moment.

The same day a hand-bill was published from the king of Sweden, by which all ecclesiastics, both secular and regular, at Warsaw, were forbidden to intermeddle with affairs of state, under very severe penalties. For the greater security guards were posted at the doors of all the prelates' houses, and no stranger was admitted into the town. He took upon himself the odium of these little severities, that there might not be any difference between Stanislaus and the clergy upon his accession. He said that it was relaxation from the fatigues of war to give a check to the intrigues of the court of Rome, and that he fought this with paper, while he must attack other princes by real arms.

The cardinal primate was solicited, by Charles and Stanislaus, to perform the ceremony of the coronation. He did not think it worth quitting Dantzic to consecrate a king, who had been chosen against his inclinations; but as it was always his policy to do nothing without some pretext

for it, he wanted to provide a substantial excuse for his refusal, and therefore caused the pope's brief to be fixed in the night to the door of his own house. The magistracy of Dantzic, in a great rage, made enquiry after the perpetrators of it, but they could not be found. The primate pretended to be mightily angry, but in reality was very well pleased. He had a reason for not consecrating the new king, and at the same time kept fair with Charles XII. Augustus and Stanislaus, with his own republic, and with the pope who had ordered him to come to Rome and give an account of his conduct; but as politicians themselves sometimes experience remorse in their last moments, he wrote to king Augustus upon his death-bed to ask his pardon.

The coronation was solemnised quietly and magnificently 4th October 1705, in the town of Warsaw, notwithstanding the usual custom in Poland of crowning their kings at Cracow. Stanislaus Leczinsky and his wife Charlotte Opalinska were crowned king and queen of Poland by the hands of the archbishop of Leopold, assisted by several other prelates. Charles XII. was present at the

ceremony incognito, the only fruit he reaped from his conquests.

Whilst he was thus giving a king to the conquered Poles, and Denmark did not presume to trouble him; whilst the king of Prussia courted his friendship, and Augustus had retired to his hereditary dominions; the czar daily grew more formidable. He had feebly assisted Augustus in Poland, but had made powerful diversions in Ingria.

He not only began to be a great soldier himself, but also to teach his Moscovites the art of war. Discipline was established among his troops; he had good engineers, a well-served artillery, and many excellent officers; and had learnt the great art of subsisting his armies. Some of his general both knew how to fight, and, if occasion required, to decline it; and besides, he had formed a fleet which was able to make head against the Swedes in the Baltic sea.

Strengthened by all these advantages which were owing to his own genius alone, and the absence of the king of Sweden, he took Narva by assault, 21st August, 1704, after a regular siege,

and having prevented its being relieved either by sea or land. As soon as the soldiers were masters of the town they fell to plunder, and gave themselves up to the most enormous barbarities. The czar ran from place to place to put a stop to the disorder and massacre. He himself snatched women out of the hands of the soldiers, who were going to cut their throats, after having ravished them. He was even obliged to kill, with his own hands, several Moscovites who would not attend to his orders. They yet shew the table in the townhouse at Narva, upon which he laid his sword as he entered, and tell the words which he spoke to the citizens, who flocked thither after him : It is not, said he, with the blood of the inhabitants, that my sword is stained, but with that of the Moscovites, whom I have shed to save your lives.

Had the czar always retained that humanity, he would have been the first of men. He aspired to greater achievements than the destruction of towns. He was at that time laying the foundations of a city not far from Narva, in the midst of his new conquests. This was the city of Peters-



burgh, which he has since made the seat of his residence and the centre of his trade. It is situated between Finland and Ingria, in a fenny island, round which the Neva divides itself, into several branches, before it falls into the gulph of Finland. He himself drew the plan of the town, fortress, the port, quays which adorn, and forts which defend the entrance into it. This desert and uncultivated island, which was nothing but a heap of mud in the short summer of those climates, and in winter a frozen pool, which could not be approached by land, but by traversing trackless forests and deep morasses, and had hitherto been only the habitation of bears and wolves, was filled up in 1703, by the labour of upwards of three hundred thousand men, whom the czar had collected in his own dominions. The peasants of the kingdom of Astracan, and those who inhabit the frontiers of China were transported to Petersburg. He was obliged to break through forests, to open ways, to drain marshes, and raise mounds before he could lay the foundations of the city. Nature was forced through the whole. The czar was resolved to people a country, which

did not seem designed for men. Neither the inundations which ruined his works, the barrenness of the soil, the ignorance of the workmen, nor even a mortality which carried off two hundred thousand men at the outset, could shake his resolution. The city was founded amidst as many obstacles, as nature, the genius of the people, and an unfortunate war could raise against it. Petersburgh was become a city in 1705, and its port was even then filled with vessels. The emperor drew strangers thither in great numbers by rewards, bestowing lands upon some, houses upon others, and encouraging all the artists, who came to civilise that savage climate. Above all, he had made it inaccessible to the efforts of an enemy. The Swedish generals, who frequently beat his troops in every other quarter, were not able to injure this growing colony, which enjoyed a perfect calm, in the midst of the surrounding war.

The czar in thus forming himself new dominions, still held out an helping hand to king Augustus, who was losing his; he persuaded him, by general Patkul, who had lately entered into the service of Moscovy, and was then the czar's

ambassador in Saxony, to come to Grodno, and once more confer with him upon the unhappy state of his affairs. King Augustus came thither with some troops, attended by general Schullenburg, whose passage over the Oder had rendered him famous in the north, and in whom he placed his last hopes. The czar arrived, and ordered seventy thousand men to follow him. The two monarchs formed new schemes of war. King Augustus, as he was dethroned, was no longer afraid of exasperating the Poles by giving up their country to the Moscovite troops. It was resolved that the czar's army should be divided into several bodies to oppose the king of Sweden step by step. During the time of this interview, king Augustus renewed the order of the white eagle, a weak expedient to draw over to his interest certain Polish lords, who were more desirous of substantial advantages than nominal honour, which becomes ridiculous, when held of a prince, who has nothing left of a king but the title. The conference of the two kings ended in an extraordinary manner. The czar departed suddenly, and left his troops to his ally, to go and

extinguish, in person, a rebellion, which threatened him in Astracan. He was scarcely gone from him, before king Augustus ordered Patkul to be arrested at Dresden. All Europe were, in amaze that, contrary to the laws of nations, and apparently against his own interest also, he should venture to imprison the ambassador of the only prince who protected him.

The secret of the affair as given to me by mareschal Saxe the son of Augustus, was this : Patkul, proscribed in Sweden for having maintained the privileges of Livonia his country, had been general to king Augustus ; but his high and active spirit ill agreeing with the haughty disposition of general Flemming, the king's favourite, more imperious and alert than himself, he had gone into the service of the czar, whose general he then was, and ambassador to Augustus. He was a man of great discernment, and had discovered that the views of Flemming and the chancellor of Saxony were to offer peace to the king of Sweden at any rate. He formed immediately a design to prevent them, and to bring about an accommodation between the czar and Sweden.

The chancellor countermined this project, and obtained leave to seize upon his person. King Augustus told the czar that Patkul was a perfidious wretch and betrayed them both. However he had no other fault, but that of having served his new master too well ; an unseasonable piece of service is often recompensed with the punishment of treason.

In the mean while the seventy thousand Moscovites on one side, divided into several small bodies, burnt and ravaged the estates of the adherents to Stanislaus ; and Schullemburg on the other was advancing with fresh troops. The fortune of the Swedes dispersed these two armies in less than two months. Charles XII. and Stanislaus fell upon the separate bodies of the Moscovites one after another ; but with so little intermission that one Moscovite general was beaten before he knew of his companion's defeat.

No obstacle could stop the progress of the conqueror. If he found a river betwixt him and the enemy, Charles and his Swedes would swim their horses over it. One party of Swedes took the baggage of Augustus, in which were two hun-

three hundred thousand crowns in silver ; Stanislaus made a seizure of eight hundred thousand ducats belonging to prince Menzikow, the Moscovite general. Charles at the head of his horse marched thirty leagues in four and twenty hours, every soldier leading another horse to mount, when his own was knocked up. The Moscovites, terrified and reduced to a small number, fled in disorder beyond the Boristhenes.

Whilst Charles was thus driving the Moscovites before him into the heart of Lithuania, Schullemburg at last repassed the Oder, and came, at the head of twenty thousand men, to give battle to the grand mareschal Renschild, who was looked upon the best general Charles XII. had, and was called the Parmenio of the Alexander of the north. These two famous generals, who seemed to participate their masters' destiny, met near Punitz in a place called Frawenstad, a territory already fatal to the troops of Augustus. Renschild had no more than thirteen battalions and twenty-two squadrons, making together nearly ten thousand men ; Schullemburg had twice as many. It must here be observed, that he had in

his army a corps of from six to seven thousand Moscovites, which had been long disciplined, and were relied upon as experienced soldiers. The battle of Frawenstad was fought 12th February, 1706. But this very general Schullemburg, who with four thousand men had, in a manner, turned the fortune of the king of Sweden, sunk under that of general Renschild. The engagement did not last a quarter of an hour ; the Saxons made not a moment's resistance ; the Moscovites threw down their arms upon the first appearance of the Swedes ; the terror was so sudden, and the disorder so great, that the conquerors found upon the field of battle seven thousand firelocks, all charged, which had been thrown away without firing. Never was defeat quicker, more complete and more shameful ; and yet no general had ever made a finer disposition than Schullemburg on that day by the confession of all the Saxon and Swedish officers, who learnt by the result how little human prudence has to do with events.

Among the prisoners there was found an entire regiment of Frenchmen. These poor creatures had been taken by the Saxon troops in 1704, at

the famous battle of Hocsted, so fatal to the grandeur of Louis XIV. They had since enlisted themselves into the service of king Augustus, who had formed them into a regiment of dragoons, and given the command to a Frenchman, of the Joyeuse family. The colonel was killed in the first, or rather sole charge of the Swedes ; and the entire regiment was made prisoners of war. From that day these Frenchmen desired that they might be taken into the service of Charles XII. and were received into his service by a singular fate, which reserved them again to change their conqueror and master.

As to the Moscovites, they begged for life upon their knees ; but were inhumanly massacred in cold blood above six hours after the battle, to revenge, on them, the depredations of their countrymen, and disencumber themselves of a number of prisoners they knew not what to do with.

Augustus now found himself without resources ; he had nothing left but Cracow, where he had shut himself up with two regiments of Moscovites, two of Saxons ; and some troops of the army



of the crown, by whom he was even afraid he should be delivered up to the conqueror ; but his misfortunes were increased when he heard that Charles XII. had at last entered Saxony 1st September 1706.

He traversed Silesia without condescending to mention it even to the court of Vienna. Germany was in confusion ; the diet of Ratisbon, which represents the empire, and whose resolutions are often as ineffectual as they are solemn, declared the king of Sweden an enemy to the empire, in case he passed the Oder with his army ; a determination which resolved him rather to enter Germany.

Upon his approach the villages were deserted, and the inhabitants fled on all sides. Charles did here, as before at Copenhagen. He caused proclamations to be every where fixed up, that his sole object was peace ; that all those who returned to their houses, and paid the contributions he should require, should be treated as his own subjects, and the rest pursued without quarter. This declaration from a prince, who was known never to have broken his word, brought back in

crowds, those whom fear had driven away. He encamped at Altranstad, near the plain of Lutzen, famous for the victory and death of Gustavus Adolphus. He went to the place where that great man fell; and when they had brought him upon the spot, I have endeavoured, said he, to live like him, God may perhaps one day grant me as glorious a death.

From this camp he gave orders to the states of Saxony to meet, and send him without delay the registers of the finances of the electorate. As soon as he had them in his power, and was accurately informed what Sweden could supply, he imposed a tax upon it of six hundred and twenty-five thousand rixdollars a month. Besides this contribution, the Saxons were obliged to furnish every Swedish soldier with two pounds of meat, two pounds of bread, two pots of beer, and two pence a day, with forage for the cavalry. The contributions being thus regulated, the king established a new police to protect the Saxons from the insults of his soldiers. He ordered, in all the towns where he put garrisons, that every innkeeper, in whose house the soldiers were quar-

tered, should give monthly certificates of their behaviour, without which certificate the soldier was not to have his pay. Inspectors also went every fourteen days from house to house, to make enquiry whether the Swedes had been guilty of any irregularity; and care was taken to make the inn-keepers amends, and punish the persons in fault.

But though the troops of Charles XII, lived under so severe a discipline, that they plundered no towns carried by assault, before they had leave; that they even plundered in a regular manner, and left off upon the first signal; and the Swedes to this day boast of the discipline they observed in Saxony; yet the Saxons complain of most terrible ravages committed by them; contradictions which it would be impossible to reconcile, did we not consider how differently men view the same objects. It can scarcely be conceived but that the conquerors must at some times have transgressed the rules of moderation; and that the conquered should term the slightest excess, the most shocking injuries. One day, as the king was riding out near Leipsick, a Saxon peasant

threw himself at his feet to ask justice against a grenadier, who had just taken from him what he had designed for his family's dinner. The king ordered the soldier to be brought before him. Is it true, said he, with a stern countenance, that you have robbed this man? Sire, said the soldier, I have not done him so much mischief, as your majesty has done his master; you have taken a kingdom from him, and I have only taken a turkey from this fellow. The king gave the poor man ten ducats, and pardoned the soldier for the boldness of his reply, saying, Remember friend, if I have taken a kingdom from king Augustus, I have appropriated nothing to myself.

The great mart at Leipsick was held as usual; the tradesmen came thither in perfect security; not one Swedish soldier was seen in the fair; it was said the king of Sweden's army lay in Saxony only to keep the peace. He commanded throughout all the electorate with as absolute a power and as profound tranquillity as in Stockholm.

King Augustus wandering in Poland, and deprived at once of his kingdom and electorate, at

last wrote a letter with his own hand to Charles XII. to ask a peace. This letter he secretly sent by Baron Inhof and M. Fingsten, referendary of the privy council ; he gave them full powers and a blank signature. Go, said he, endeavour to obtain for me reasonable and christian-like conditions. He was under the necessity of concealing this overture for peace, and of not having recourse to the mediation of any prince ; for being then in Poland at the mercy of the Moscovites, he had reason to fear that the dangerous ally, whom he abandoned, would revenge, upon him, his submission to the conqueror. His two plenipotentiaires came by night to Charles XIIth's camp, and had a private audience. The king read the letter, and said, to the plenipotentiaires, Gentlemen, I will give my answer in a moment. He immediately retired into his cabinet and wrote as follows :

I consent to peace upon the following conditions, in which it must not be expected that I make the least alteration :

I. That king Augustus renounce for ever the crown of Poland ; that he acknowledge Stanislaus

as lawful king, and that he promise never to remount the throne, not even after the death of Stanislaus.

II. That he renounce all other treaties, and particularly those he has made with Moscovy.

III. That he send back, with honour, into my camp, the princes Sobiesky, and all the prisoners he may have taken,

IV. That he deliver up all the deserters, who have entered into his service, and particularly John Patkul; and that all proceedings be stopped against such as have left his service for mine.

He gave this paper to count Piper, charging him to negotiate the rest with the plenipotentiaries of king Augustus. They were shocked at the severity of the propositions; and used all the little art men can employ, where power is wanting, to soften the rigour of the king of Sweden. They had several conferences with count Piper, but could gain no other answer to all their persuasions, than, Such is the will of the king my master; he never changes his resolutions.

Whilst this peace was silently negotiating in Saxony, fortune seemed to put king Augustus

into a condition of obtaining one more honourable, and of treating with his conqueror upon a more equal footing.

Prince Menzikow, generalissimo of the Moscovite army, brought him into Poland a body of thirty thousand men, at a time when he not only did not desire, but was even afraid of more of their assistance. He had with him some Polish and Saxon troops, which in all made up about 6000 men. Surrounded with this small body by prince Menzikow's army, he was under the most terrible apprehensions, in case they should discover his negotiation. He saw himself at the same time dethroned by his enemy, and in danger of being arrested by his ally. In this delicate situation there appeared in view of the army one of the Swedish generals, named Meyerfield, at the head of ten thousand men at Calish, near the palatinate of Posnanian. Prince Menzikow pressed king Augustus to give them battle. The king in the utmost perplexity delayed it under various pretexts; for though the enemy had but one-third the number, there were four thousand Swedes in Meyerfield's army, and that was enough

to render the event doubtful ; and to fall upon the Swedes during the negotiation, and lose the victory, was ruin past all recovery. He therefore determined to send a person, upon whom he could rely, to the opposite general, let him into part of the secret of the peace, and advise him to retreat ; but this had a very different effect from what was expected. General Meyerfeld imagined that a snare was laid to intimidate him ; and upon that alone he resolved to risk the battle.

The Russians then for the first time conquered the Swedes in a pitched battle. This victory, which king Augustus gained almost against his own inclination, was complete, and he entered triumphant, in the midst of his ill fortune, into Warsaw, formerly the capital of his kingdom, now a dismantled and ruined town, ready to receive any conqueror, and to acknowledge the strongest for king. He was tempted to seize upon this moment of prosperity, and fall upon the king of Sweden in Saxony with the Moscovite army. But upon recollection, that Charles XII. was at the head of a Swedish army, hitherto invincible, that the Russians would forsake him upon the



first information of the treaty he had begun; that Saxony, his hereditary dominions, already exhausted of men and money, would be equally ravaged by the Moscovites and Swedes; that the empire engaged in a war with France could not assist him; that he should be left without dominions, money, or friends; he judged it better to comply with the terms the king of Sweden might impose upon him. These terms were made more severe, when Charles had information that king Augustus had fallen upon his troops during the negotiation. His passion, and the pleasure of humbling still more an enemy, who had gained an advantage over him, made him the more inflexible upon all the articles of the treaty. Thus the victory of king Augustus served only to render his circumstances the more unfortunate, and which in all probability never happened to any one but himself.

He had just sung *Te Deum* at Warsaw, when Fingsten, one of his plenipotentiaries, arrived from Saxony, with the treaty of peace, which deprived him of his crown. Augustus paused a while, but signed it, and then set out for Saxony,

in the vain hope that his presence might soften the king of Sweden, and that his enemy would perhaps call to mind the ancient alliances of their houses, and the blood which united them.

The two princes had their first interview at Gutersdorf in count Piper's quarters, without any ceremony. Charles XII. was in jack-boots, with a piece of black taffety tied round his neck instead of a cravat; his cloaths were as usual made of a coarse blue cloth, with brass buttons. He had, at his side, a long sword, which had served him in the battle of Narva, and on the hilt of which he would often lean. The conversation turned wholly upon his great boots. Charles XII. told king Augustus he had not laid them aside for six years, except when he went to bed. These trifles were the sole discourse that passed between two kings, one of whom had dispossessed the other of a crown. Augustus spoke all the while with an air of complaisance and satisfaction, which princes and men habituated to great affairs know how to assume amidst the most cruel mortifications. The two kings dined together twice; Charles always affected to give the right hand to

king Augustus; but was so far from relenting in his demands, that he made them still harder. It was a severe trial for a sovereign to be obliged to give up the general of an army and a public minister; a still greater degradation to send the jewels and archives of the crown to his successor Stanislaus; but the measure of his disgrace was to be also reduced to felicitate upon his accession to the throne, the very man who was in the seat which rightly belonged to him. Charles required Augustus to write a letter to Stanislaus, which the dethroned king suffered himself to be told more than once. The following is a faithful transcript of the original, which I recently saw, and which king Stanislaus keeps constantly by him.

SIR and BROTHER,

We had thought that it was not necessary to enter into a private epistolary correspondence with your majesty; notwithstanding, to give pleasure to his Swedish majesty, and that we may not lie under the imputation of making any difficulty to satisfy his desire, we hereby congratulate you upon your accession to the crown, and wish

that you may find in your country subjects more faithful than those we left there. All men must do us the justice to think that we have met with an ungrateful return for our kindness, and that the greater part of our subjects have only studied to promote our ruin. We hope that you may never be exposed to similar misfortunes, and leave you to God's protection.

Your brother and neighbour,

AUGUSTUS, King.

*Dresden, 8th April, 1707.*

Augustus was further obliged to order all the officers of his magistracy no longer to style him king of Poland, and to efface the title, he renounced, from the publick prayers. He was less concerned, about setting the Sobieskys at liberty : though these princes upon coming out of prison refused to see him ; but the sacrifice of Patkul was a circumstance of great mortification. The czar on one side loudly demanded him back as his ambassador, and on the other the king of Sweden made terrible threats, if they refused to give him up to him. Patkul was then shut up in the castle of Kœnigstein in Saxony. King Augustus thought

of an expedient to satisfy Charles XII. and his own honour at the same time. He sent his guards to deliver up the unhappy prisoner to the Swedish troops; but previously forwarded a secret order to the governor of Kœnigstein to let him escape. Patkul's evil genius defeated the care that was taken to save him. The governor knowing him to be very rich, would have had him purchase his liberty. The prisoner still relying upon the law of nations, and informed of the intentions of king Augustus, refused to pay for what he thought he should obtain gratuitously. During this interval, the guards appointed to seize him arrived, and immediately delivered him to four Swedish officers, who carried him strait to the head quarters at Altranstad, where he continued three months fastened to a stake by a heavy iron chain. From thence he was conducted to Casimir.

Charles XII. forgetting that Patkul was the czar's ambassador; and considering only that he was born his subject, ordered a council of war to pass the most rigorous sentence upon him. He was condemned to be broken alive and quartered.

A chaplain came to let him know that he was to die, without informing him of the mode of punishment. At that moment, the man, who had braved death in so many battles, finding himself alone with a priest, and his courage no longer supported by glory or passion, the sources of human intrepidity, shed agonizing tears upon the chaplain's bosom. He was betrothed to a Saxon lady, Madam d'Einsiedel, who had all the advantages of birth, merit, and beauty, and whom he had thoughts of marrying much about the time that he was given up to death. He desired the chaplain to visit her, in order to offer her consolation, and to assure her that he died full of the most tender regard for her. When he was led to the place of punishment, and saw the wheels and stakes prepared, he fell into convulsions of terror, and threw himself into the arms of the minister, who embraced and covered him with his cloak, and wept over him. A Swedish officer then read with a loud voice a paper containing these words :

This is to make known the express order of his majesty our most clement lord, which is, that

this man, who is a traitor to his country, be broken upon the wheel and quartered, for the expiation of his crimes, and an example to others; that every one may beware of treason, and serve his king faithfully. At the words most clement lord, Patkul cried out, what clemency! and at those of traitor to his country, alas, said he, I have served it too well. He received sixteen strokes, and endured the longest and most dreadful tortures that can be imagined. Thus perished the unfortunate John Rainold Patkul, ambassador and general to the emperor of Russia.

Those who looked upon him only as a subject, rebellious against his king, said he had deserved death; but those who considered him as a Livonian, born in a province which had privileges to defend, and who recollected that he was driven from Livonia only for having supported those rights, called him the martyr of his country's liberty. All, however, agreed, that the title of ambassador to the czar ought to have rendered his person sacred. The king of Sweden, alone, brought up in principles of despotism, thought

he had done no more than an act of justice, whilst all Europe condemned his cruelty.

His limbs were quartered, and remained exposed upon stakes till 1713, when Augustus, having regained his throne, ordered these testimonies of the necessity he was reduced to at Altranstad, to be collected together. They were brought to him in a box at Warsaw, in the presence of Buzenval, the French envoy. The king of Poland, shewing the box to the minister, only said, these are the limbs of Patkul, without adding any thing either to blame or deplore his memory, or without any of the persons present venturing to speak upon so tender and melancholy a subject.

About the same time one Paikel, a Livonian, an officer in the Saxon troops, who was taken in arms, was condemned, at Stockholm, by a decree of the senate; but his sentence was only to lose his head. This difference of punishments in the same case evidently shewed, that Charles, in putting Patkul to so cruel a death, thought more to revenge himself than to punish him. However, Paikel, after his condemnation, proposed to the senate to let the king into the secret of making



gold, in case he would pardon him. He made the experiment of his secret in prison before colonel Hamilton and some magistrates of the town; and whether he had in fact discovered any useful art, or whether he had merely that of deceiving plausibly, which is by far the most probable, gold found at the bottom of the crucible, after the experiment was taken to the mint at Stockholm, and a report, so juridically, and which appeared so important, was made, that the queen, grandmother of Charles, ordered the execution to be suspended, till the king, being informed of this singular occurrence, should send his orders to Stockholm.

The king made answer, That he had refused the pardon of the criminal to the intreaties of his friends, and he never would grant that to interest which he had denied to friendship. This inflexibility in a prince who thought the secret possible, had something heroical in it. When it was told king Augustus, he said, I am not surprised at the king of Sweden's indifference for the philosopher's stone, he found that in Saxony.

When the czar had learnt the strange peace

that king Augustus, notwithstanding their treaties, had concluded at Altranstad; and that Patkul, his plenipotentiary ambassador, had been given up to the king of Sweden in contempt of the laws of nations, his complaints resounded through all the courts of Europe; he wrote to the emperor of Germany, to the queen of England, and to the states general of the united provinces; he called the melancholy necessity to which Augustus yielded, by the names of cowardice and treachery; he conjured all these powers to interpose their mediation for the sending back of his ambassador, and to prevent the affront which in his person would be offered to all crowned heads: he pressed them for their honour's sake not to degrade themselves so as to become guaranties for the peace of Altranstad, which guaranty Charles XII. would have forced from them by threats. These letters had no other effect, than to shew the power of the king of Sweden still more. The emperor, England, and Holland, were then engaged in a destructive war against France; and they did not judge it advisable to exasperate Charles XII. by the refusal

of the vain ceremony of being guarantees to a treaty. As to the unfortunate Patkul, not one power interposed its good offices in his behalf; which shews how little a subject ought to rely on princes, and how much all kings at that time dreaded the sovereign of Sweden.

It was proposed, in the czar's council, to retaliate upon the Swedish officers, who were prisoners at Moscow. The czar would not consent to a barbarity which would have been attended with such fatal consequences; there were more Moscovite prisoners in Sweden, than Swedes in Moscovy.

He sought a more advantageous revenge. The main body of his enemy's army was inactive in Saxony. Levenhaupt, the king of Sweden's general, who was left in Poland with about twenty thousand men, was not able to guard the passes in a country without forts, and full of factions. Stanislaus was in the camp of Charles XII. The Moscovite emperor seized upon this critical opportunity, and re-entered Poland with above sixty thousand men; he divided them into several bodies, and marched with a flying camp as far as

Leopold, which had not a Swedish garrison. All the towns of Poland are his, who appears before their gates with an army. He caused an assembly to be called together at Leopold, not much unlike that which had dethroned Augustus at Warsaw.

Poland then had two primates, as well as two kings, the one nominated by Augustus, the other by Stanislaus. The primate nominated by Augustus summoned the assembly of Leopold, and drew thither all those whom that prince had abandoned by the peace of Altranstad, and those whom the czar's money had brought over to his interest, and it was proposed to elect a new king. Poland was now upon the point of having three kings, without being able to say which was the true one.

During the conferences of Leopold, the czar, united by interest with the emperor of Germany through the common fear they had of the king of Sweden, secretly obtained of him a number of German officers. These came daily to make a considerable augmentation in his forces, by bringing with them experience and discipline. He

engaged them in his service by great rewards; and for the better encouragement of his own troops, he gave his portrait, set round with diamonds, to all the general officers and colonels who had fought at the battle of Calish; the subaltern officers had gold, and private soldiers silver medals. These monuments of the victory at Calish were all struck in the new city of Petersburg, where the arts flourished in proportion as he trained up his troops to a sense of emulation and glory.

The confusion, multiplicity of factions, and continual ravages in Poland, prevented the diet of Leopold from coming to any resolution. The czar transferred it to Lublin. The change of place did not lessen the disorders and uncertainty which all mankind were in; and the assembly satisfied itself with neither acknowledging Augustus, who had abdicated, nor Stanislaus, who had been elected in spite of them; but they were neither sufficiently united nor resolute to nominate a king. During these fruitless deliberations, the party of the princes Sapieha, of Oginsky, of those who were secretly inclined to king Augus-

tus, and the new subjects of Stanislaus, all made war, ravaged each other's estates, and completed their country's ruin. The Swedish troops, commanded by Levenhaupt, one part of which was in Livonia, another in Lithuania, and a third in Poland, were daily in pursuit of the Moscovite troops, and set fire to every thing that opposed Stanislaus. The Russians alike ruined friends and enemies; nothing was to be seen but towns in ashes, and wandering troops of Poles, deprived of all their substance, and equally detesting their two kings, Charles XII. and the czar.

King Stanislaus set out from Altranstad 15th July 1707, with general Renschild, sixteen Swedish regiments, and great sums of money, to appease all these troubles in Poland, and get himself peaceably recognized. He was acknowledged wherever he passed; the discipline of his troops, which the more clearly exposed the barbarity of the Moscovites, gained him the people's inclinations; his extreme affability united almost all the factions, in proportion as it was known, and his money procured him the greater part of the crown army. The czar, fearing he should want

provisions in a country which his troops had laid waste, retired into Lithuania, where he had appointed the rendezvous of the several corps of his army, and where he was to establish magazines. This retreat left king Stanislaus the peaceable sovereign of almost all Poland.

The only one who then gave him trouble in his states was count Siniawsky, grand general of the crown, nominated by king Augustus. This man, who had very great abilities, and much ambition, was at the head of a third party. He neither owned Augustus nor Stanislaus; and after having tried every thing to get elected himself, he was contented to be chief of a party, as he could not be king. The troops of the crown, who continued under his command, had scarcely any other pay, besides the liberty of ravaging their own country with impunity. All who had suffered from, or were apprehensive of, their plunder, presently submitted to Stanislaus, whose power was daily acquiring strength.

The king of Sweden was then receiving ambassadors in his camp at Altranstad, from almost all the princes in christendom. Some came to

beseech him to quit the dominions of the empire, and others pressed him to turn his arms against the emperor; a report was then current, that he intended to join with France, and overthrow the house of Austria. Amongst these ambassadors was the famous John duke of Marlborough, sent by Anne queen of Great Britain. This man, who never laid siege to a town which he did not take, nor fought a battle which he did not gain, was at St. James's a perfect courtier, in parliament the head of a party, and in foreign countries the most able negotiator of his time. He had done France as much mischief by his understanding as by his arms. Fagel, secretary of the states general, a man of very great merit, has been heard to say, that more than once the states general having resolved to oppose what the duke of Marlborough was to lay before them; the duke came, spoke to them in French, a language in which he expressed himself very ill, and brought them all over to his way of thinking, a fact which lord Bolingbroke confirmed to me.

In conjunction with prince Eugene, the companion of his victories, and Heinsius, grand pen-



sionary of Holland, he supported all the weight of the enterprizes of the allies against France. He knew that Charles was exasperated against the empire and the emperor; that he was secretly solicited by the French, and that if this conqueror should join Lewis XIV. the allies would be undone.

Charles had, it is true, given his word in 1700 not to intermeddle in the war of Lewis XIV. against the allies; but the duke of Marlborough did not believe that any prince would be such a slave to his word, as not to sacrifice it to his greatness and interest. He therefore set out from the Hague with a design to sound the intentions of the king of Sweden.

M. Fabricius, who was then with Charles XII. assured me, that the duke of Marlborough upon his arrival, applied secretly, not to count Piper, the prime minister, but to baron Görtz, who began to share the king's confidence with Piper. He even came in the baron's coach to the quarters of Charles XII. and there was a visible coldness between him and Piper.

Being afterwards presented by Piper to the

king, with Robinson, the English minister, he told him in French that he should think himself happy to be permitted to learn under his command what he was yet ignorant of in the art of war. The king did not answer the compliment by any civility, and appeared to forget that it was Marlborough who spoke to him. I know that he considered the dress of that great man as too formal, and that he had too little of the warrior in his manner. The conversation was tedious and general, Charles XII. speaking in Swedish, and Robinson acting as interpreter. Marlborough, who was never in haste to make propositions, and had learnt, by a long course of experience, the art of decyphering mankind, and finding out the secret connexion between their inmost thoughts and actions, gestures, and discourse, fixed his eyes attentively upon the king. When he spoke to him of war in general, he thought he perceived in his majesty a natural aversion towards France, and observed that he was pleased when he talked of the conquests of the allies. He mentioned the czar to him, and took notice that his eyes always kindled at his name, notwith-

standing the moderation of the conference ; and he farther remarked, that a map of Moscovy laid before him upon the table. He wanted no more to determine him in his judgment, that the real design of the king of Sweden, and his sole ambition was to dethrone the czar, as he had already done the king of Poland. He understood that he had no other views by continuing in Saxony, than to impose certain hard laws upon the emperor of Germany. He well knew that the emperor would make no resistance, and that thus matters would be easily made up. He left Charles XII. to his natural inclination ; and satisfied with having discovered his intentions, made him no kind of proposal. These particulars have been confirmed to me by the dutchess of Marlborough, his widow, who is still living (1727.)

As few negotiations are concluded without money, and ministers are sometimes seen to sell the hatred or favours of their masters, it is believed throughout Europe, that the duke of Marlborough's success with the king of Sweden was obtained by a large sum of money, opportunely given to count Piper ; and the Swede's memory

is reflected upon for it to this day. For my own part, after having traced this report as near as possible to its source, I have found that Piper received a small present from the emperor by the hands of count Wratislau, with the consent of the king his master, and nothing from the duke of Marlborough. It is certain that Charles was obstinately bent upon dethroning the emperor of Russia, that he then advised with nobody, nor had any occasion for count Piper's instigations to stir him up to revenge, which he had so long thirsted after against Peter Alexiowitz. And lastly, what completes the vindication of the minister, is the honour which Charles XII. paid to his memory a long time after; when having learnt that Piper had died in Russia, he caused his body to be transported to Stockholm, and buried with great pomp and magnificence at his own expence.

The king, who had not yet experienced any reverse, nor even an interruption of his successes, thought that one year would be sufficient for dethroning the czar, and that he might then return and raise himself, by his own power, to the dig-

nity of arbiter of Europe ; but he had a mind first to humiliate the emperor of Germany.

Baron de Stralheim, the Swedish envoy to Vienna, at an entertainment, had a quarrel with the count de Zobor, the imperial chamberlain; the latter having refused to drink the health of Charles XII. and saying disrespectfully, that this prince had not dealt properly by his master, Stralheim gave him the lie, and struck him, and after this insult, dared to demand reparation of the imperial court. The fear of displeasing the king of Sweden forced the emperor to banish the subject it was his duty to have avenged. Charles XII. was not satisfied, but insisted upon the delivery of count Zobor into his hands. The pride of the court of Vienna was obliged to stoop, and give up the count to the king, who sent him back, after having kept him some time a prisoner at Stettin.

He further demanded, in opposition to all the laws of nations, that they should deliver up to him fifteen hundred unfortunate Moscovites, who having escaped his arms, had fled into the emperor's dominions. The court of Vienna must

have consented to this extravagant demand also and they all had been delivered over to the enemy, if the Moscovite envoy at Vienna had not artfully provided for their escape, by different roads.

The third and last of his demands was the most considerable. He declared himself protector of the emperor's protestant subjects in Silesia, a province belonging to the house of Austria, and not to the empire. It was his will, that the emperor should grant them certain liberties and privileges, which had indeed been established by the treaties of Westphalia, but were extinguished, or at least eluded, by those of Riswick. The emperor, who wanted nothing so much as to get rid of so dangerous a neighbour, still complied, and granted him all that he desired. The Lutherans had above a hundred churches in Silesia, which the Roman Catholics were obliged by this treaty to give up; but many of these concessions, which the king of Sweden's fortune procured them, were reclaimed as soon as ever he was not in a condition to impose laws.

The emperor, who was forced to make these

concessions, and absolutely complied in every thing with the will of Charles XII. was named Joseph, the eldest son of Leopold, and brother to Charles VI who succeeded him. The pope's internuncio, who then resided in Joseph's court, reproached him very severely, that a Roman Catholic emperor like him, should thus give up the interest of his own religion in favour of hereticks. It is well for you, answered the emperor smiling, that the king of Sweden did not propose to make me a Lutheran; for if he had, I don't know what I should have done.

Count Wratislau, his ambassador to Charles XII. brought to Leipsick the treaty in favour of the Silesians, signed by his master's own hand. Charles then said he was satisfied, and was the emperor's best friend. He was however not free from vexation, at having been opposed, as much as was in her power, by Rome. He looked with the utmost contempt upon the weakness of that court, which having one half of Europe for its irreconcilable enemy, is always distrusting the other, and supports its credit only by its skill in negotiations. In the mean time he meditated

revenge. He told count Wratislau, that the Swedes had formerly conquered Rome, and had not degenerated like that city. He let the pope know, that he would one day demand back the effects which queen Christina had left at Rome. One cannot tell how far this young conqueror would have carried his resentments and his arms, if fortune had prospered his designs. Nothing then seemed impossible to him. He had even sent several officers secretly into Asia, and as far as Egypt, to take plans of the towns, and inform him of the strength of those countries. It is certain that if any one could have overturned the empire of the Persians and Turks, and then have passed into Italy, it was Charles XII. He was as young as Alexander, as warlike and as enterprising; more indefatigable, more robust, and more temperate; and the Swedes perhaps exceeded the Macedonians; but such projects, which are looked upon as divine, when attended with success, are treated as chimæras, when they fail.

At last, all difficulties being removed, and all his desires executed; after having humbled the emperor, given laws in the empire, protected his



Lutheran religion in the midst of Roman Catholics, de throned one king, crowned another, and seen himself the terror of all princes, he prepared for his departure. The pleasures of Saxony, where he had lain idle a full year, had made no alteration in his manner of living. He rode on horseback three times a day, got up at four o'clock in the morning, dressed himself alone, drank no wine, sat at table but one quarter of an hour, exercised his troops every day, and knew no other pleasure but that of making Europe tremble.

The Swedes did not yet know whither their king would lead them. It was suspected only in the army, that Charles might go to Moscow. Some days before his departure, he ordered the grand mareschal of his household to give him in writing the route from Leipsick. . . . He paused a while at that word, and that the mareschal might know nothing of his projects, added smiling, . . . to all the capital cities of Europe. The mareschal brought him a list of all the routes, and at their head affected to put, in great letters, The road from Leipsick to Stockholm. The generality of the Swedes wished only

to return thither, but the king was far from the thought of letting them revisit their native country. I see, sir, said he, whither you would lead me, but we shall not return to Stockholm so soon.

The army was already upon its march, and passed near Dresden. Charles was at the head, and riding, according to his custom, about two or three hundred paces before his guards: they lost sight of him all at once, and some of the officers spurred on their horses to see where he was; but with all their enquiry they could not find him. The whole army took the alarm in a moment. It made a halt, the generals met together; the consternation was already universal, when they at length learnt from a Saxon, who was passing by, what was become of the king.

The idea struck him, as he passed so near Dresden, to pay king Augustus a visit. He entered the town on horseback, attended by three or four general officers; their names were demanded at the barrier, Charles said his name was Carl, and that he was a draban; each took a feigned name. Count Flemming, seeing them

cross the square, had only time to run and inform his master. All that could be done upon such an occasion, was present to the minister's mind, he laid it before Augustus; but Charles entered the chamber in his boots, before Augustus had time to recover from his surprise. He was then sick, and in a night-gown, but dressed himself presently. Charles breakfasted with him as a traveller, who came to take leave of his friend, and then expressed his desire to view the fortifications. During the little time that was taken up in walking round them, a Livonian condemned in Sweden, who served in the troops of Saxony, thought he could never have a more favourable opportunity of obtaining pardon, and begged of king Augustus to ask it of Charles, fully assured that his majesty could not refuse so slight a request to a prince, from whom he had just taken a crown, and in whose power he then was. Augustus was easily prevailed upon to undertake it. He stood at a little distance from the king of Sweden, and was discoursing with Hoord, a Swedish general. I believe, said he, smiling, your master will not refuse me. You don't know

him, replied general Hloord, he will rather refuse you here than' any where else. Augustus, notwithstanding, asked a pardon for the Livonian of the king in pressing terms; Charles denied him in such a manner, that he did not think fit to ask a second time. After having passed some hours in this odd kind of visit, he embraced king Augustus, and took his leave. Upon returning to his army he found all his generals still in alarm; they told him, they had determined to besiege Dresden, in case his majesty had been detained a prisoner. Good, said the king, they durst not. The next morning, upon the news that king Augustus held an extraordinary council at Dresden, you see, said baron Stralheim, they are deliberating upon what they should have done yesterday. A few days after this event, Renschild coming to wait upon the king, spoke to him with astonishment of his journey to Dresden. I trusted to my good fortune, said Charles, I have however seen a moment that was not the most satisfactory. Flemming had no great inclination that I should leave Dresden so soon.

## BOOK IV:

*Charles leaves Saxony victorious. Pursues the Czar ; strikes into the Ukraine. His losses ; he is wounded. Battle of Pultowa ; its consequences. Charles necessitated to fly into Turkey ; his reception in Bessarabia.*

CHARLES at last took leave of Saxony in September 1707, followed by an army of forty-three thousand men, heretofore covered with steel, but then shining with gold and silver, and enriched with the spoils of Poland and Saxony. Every soldier carried with him fifty crowns in ready money ; not only were all the regiments complete, but in every company were several supernumeraries. Besides this army, count Levenhaupt, one of his best generals, was expecting him in Poland with twenty thousand ; he had yet another army of fifteen thousand men in Finland ; and fresh recruits were coming from Sweden. With all these forces it was not doubted but he must dethrone the czar.

That emperor was then in Lithuania, employed in keeping up the spirits of a party, which king Augustus seemed to have renounced. His troops, divided into several bodies, fled on all sides upon the first report of the king of Sweden's approach. He had himself recommended all his generals never to wait for the conqueror with unequal force, and he was strictly obeyed.

The king of Sweden in the midst of his victorious march received an ambassador from the Turks. The ambassador had his audience in count Piper's quarters ; for it was always at the minister's that ceremonies of pomp were performed. He supported the dignity of his master by a magnificent appearance ; and the king, who was always worse lodged, worse served, and more plainly clad than the meanest officer in his army, would say that his palace was count Piper's quarters. The Turkish ambassador presented Charles with an hundred Swedish soldiers ; who having been taken by the Kalmucks, and sold in Turkey, had been redeemed by the grand signior, and were sent by him to the king as the most agreeable present he could make ; not that the

Ottoman pride pretended to do homage to the glory of Charles XII. but because the sultan, a natural enemy to the emperors of Moscovy and Germany, was desirous of strengthening himself against them by the friendship of Sweden, and alliance of Poland. The ambassador complimented Stanislaus upon his advancement to the crown; and thus he was acknowledged king in a little time by Germany, France, England, Spain, and Turkey. There remained only the pope, who, before he acknowledged him, was willing to wait till time had settled upon his head, that crown which a disgrace might remove.

Charles had scarcely given audience to the ambassador of the Ottoman Porte, before he went in search of the Moscovites.

The czar's troops had left Poland and returned thither above twenty times during the course of the war. The country lying open on all sides, and having no strong holds to cut off the retreat of an army, left the Russians at liberty to appear again and often in the very place where they had been beaten; and even to penetrate as far into the country as the conqueror. Whilst Charles was in Saxony, the czar had advanced as far as

Leopold, on the southern extremity of Poland. He was then towards the north at Grodno in Lithuania about a hundred leagues from Leopold.

Charles left Stanislaus in Poland with ten thousand Swedes and his new subjects to assist him in the preservation of his kingdom, against his foreign and domestic enemies ; as for his own part he put himself at the head of his horse and in the midst of ice marched towards Grodno in the month of January, 1708.

He had already passed the Niemen within two leagues of the town, and the czar knew nothing of his march. Upon the first news that the Swedes were coming, the czar left the town by the northern, and Charles entered by the southern gate. The king had but six hundred guards with him, the rest not being able to follow. The czar fled with above two thousand men, upon the supposition that a whole army was entering Grodno. He learnt that very day from a Polish deserter, that he had given up the place to no more than six hundred men, and that the body of the enemy's army was, still above five leagues distant. He lost no time, but sent a detachment of fifteen



hundred horse in the evening to surprise the king of Sweden in the town. The fifteen hundred Moscovites, favored by the darkness of the night, advanced as far as the first Swedish guard without being known. This guard consisted of thirty men ; and they alone sustained the attack of fifteen hundred for half a quarter of an hour. The king who lay at the other end of the town came up presently with the remainder of his six hundred guards. The Russians fled with precipitation. His army was not long before it joined him, nor he without pursuing the enemy. All the Moscovite troops dispersed in Lithuania, hastily retired from the eastern side into the palatinate of Minsky near the frontiers of Moscovy, where their rendezvous was appointed. The Swedes, whom the king also divided into several bodies, did not cease to pursue them for above thirty leagues of their way. Those who fled and those who pursued, made excessive marches almost every day, though in the midst of winter. All seasons had long been the same to the soldiers of Charles and of the czar ; the terror which the name of Charles carried with it, then made

the sole difference between the Moscovites and the Swedes.

From Grodno to the Boristhenes eastward, are nothing but morasses, deserts, and immense forests; in such places as are cultivated no provision is to be found; the country people bury all their grain, and whatever else could be preserved there under ground. In order to discover these subterraneous magazines, the earth had to be pierced with long poles pointed with iron. The Moscovites and Swedes served themselves with these provisions by turns; but they were not always found, nor were they sufficient.

The king of Sweden, who had foreseen these difficulties, had provided biscuit for the subsistence of his army, so that nothing stopped him in his march. After he had crossed the forest of Minsky where his men were obliged every moment to cut down trees to make way for his troops and baggage, he found himself on the 25th June, 1708, before the river Berezine over against Borislow.

The czar had got together the best part of his troops in that place, and had entrenched himself

to advantage. His design was to prevent the Swedes from passing the river. Charles posted some regiments on the banks of the Berezine, opposite Borislow, as though he meant to attempt the passage in sight of the enemy. At the same time he led his army three leagues higher up the river, threw a bridge over it, cut his way through a body of three thousand men, who defended that post, and marched to the enemy's army without stopping. The Russians did not however wait his coming up, but immediately decamped, and retreated towards the Boristhenes, breaking the roads, and spreading destruction wherever they passed, that by these means they might at least retard the progress of the Swedes.

Charles, surmounting all difficulties, advanced still towards the Boristhenes. He fell in with twenty thousand Moscovites in his way entrenched in a place called Hollosin, behind a morass, and which could not be come at without passing a river. Charles did not wait till the rest of his infantry came up, to begin the attack, but threw himself into the water at the head of his guards on foot, and crossed the river and morass, with

the water sometimes above his shoulders. Whilst he was thus marching against the enemy, he ordered his horse to go round the morass, and take them in flank. The Moscovites in the instant of their amaze, that no barrier could defend them, were routed by the king, who attacked them on foot, and by the Swedish cavalry.

The cavalry having made their way through the enemy, joined the king in the midst of the battle. He then mounted his horse, but some time after finding a young Swedish gentleman, named Gyl-lenstiern, whom he very much esteemed, wounded, and unable to march, he made him take his horse, and continued to command on foot at the head of his infantry. Of all the battles he had ever fought, this was perhaps, the most glorious, wherein he was exposed to the greatest dangers, and where he shewed the highest abilities. The memory of it is preserved by a medal, with this inscription on one side, *Sylvæ, Paludes, aggeres, hostes victi*; and on the other, this verse from Lucan, *Victrices copias alium laturus in orbem*.

The Russians thus obliged to fly, repassed the Boristhenes, which separates Poland from their

own country. Charles lost no time in the pursuit, he crossed that great river after them at Mohilou, the last town in Poland, which sometimes belongs to the czar and sometimes to the Poles, according to the common fate of frontier places.

The czar, thus seeing his empire, wherein he was giving birth to arts and trade, become a prey to a war, which in a little time might ruin all his projects, and perhaps overturn his throne, felt inclined to peace. He even hazarded some proposals by a Polish gentleman, who came from the Swedish army. Charles XII. who had not been used to grant peace to his enemies, but in their capitals, answered, I will treat with the czar at Moscow. When this haughty answer was brought to the czar, My brother Charles, said, he, always affects the Alexander, but I flatter myself he will not find a Darius in me.

About thirty leagues northward from Mohilou, where the king passed the Boristhenes, along the river, and still upon the frontiers of Poland and Moscovy, is situate the country of Smolensko, through which runs the great road from Poland to Moscow. This was the way the czar fled.

The king followed by long marches. Part of the Moscovite rear-guard was more than once engaged with the dragoons of the Swedish advanced guard. The latter had generally the advantage; but they weakened themselves even by conquering in these trifling skirmishes, which decided nothing, and always cost a number of men.

On the 22d of September, in this year, 1708, the king attacked a body of ten thousand horse and six thousand Kalmucks near Smolensko. These Kalmucks are Tartars, who inhabit between the kingdom of Astracan, the czar's domain, and that of Sarmarkande, belonging to the Usbek Tartars, and the country of Timur, known by the name of Tamerlane. The Kalmuck country extends eastward to the mountains, which separate the Mogul from the western part of Asia. Those who reside towards Astracan are tributary to the czar; he pretends to an absolute dominion over them, but their wandering way of life prevents his availing himself of it, and obliges him to deal with them, as the grand signior with the Arabs, sometimes bearing with, and at others punishing, their robberies. There are always some of these

Kalmucks in the troops of Moscovy, and the czar had succeeded in disciplining them like the rest of his soldiers.

The king fell upon this army with only six regiments of horse, and four thousand foot. He first broke the Moscovites at the head of his Ostrogothian regiment, and the enemy retreated. He advanced upon them through rough and hollow ways, where the Kalmucks were hidden; they then appeared again, and threw themselves between the regiment where the king was fighting and the remainder of the Swedish army. The Russians and Kalmucks in a moment surrounded that regiment, and made their way up to the king. They killed two aids de camp, who fought near his person. The king's horse was slain under him; as one of his equerries was presenting another to him, the equerry and horse were struck dead upon the spot. Charles fought on foot, encircled by some of his officers, who incontinently placed themselves round him.

Several of them were taken, wounded, killed, or carried to a distance from the king by the multitude that fell upon them, so that only five me

were left near him. He had killed above a dozen of the enemy with his own hand, without having received a single wound, by that inexpressible good fortune, which till then had ever attended him, and upon which he always relied. At last a colonel Dardoff forced his way through the Kal-mucks, with a single company of his regiment, time enough to disengage the king. The rest of the Swedes put the Tartars to the sword. The army resumed its station, Charles mounted his horse, and fatigued as he was, pursued the Russians for two leagues.

The conqueror was still in the high road to the capital of Moscovy. From Smolensko, near which this battle was fought, to Moscow, is above a hundred leagues; and the army had exhausted almost all its provisions.

The king was solicitously entreated to wait until general Lauvenhaupt, who was to bring him a supply, with a reinforcement of fifteen thousand men, came up. The king who rarely took advice not only would pay no attention to this judicious counsel, but to the great astonishment of the whole army, quitted the road to Moscow, and changed



his line of march southward towards Ukraine the Cassacks country, situate between the lesser Tartary, Poland, and Moscovy. This country extends about a hundred leagues from south to north, and almost as many from east to west. It is divided into two nearly equal parts, by the Boristhenes, which runs across from the north-west to the south-east : and the principal town is Bathurin upon the little river Sem. The most northern part of the Ukraine is cultivated and rich ; the southernmost situate in the 48th degree, is one of the most fertile, and desolate countries in the world ; its bad government suppressing all the efforts of bounteous nature to make the inhabitants happy. The people of these cantons near lesser Tartary neither plant nor sow, because the Tartars of Budziac, and Precop, and the Moldavians, all of whom subsist by robbery, would carry off their harvests.

Ukraine has always aspired to be free ; but being surrounded by Moscovy, the dominions of the grand signior, and Poland, it has been obliged to seek a protector, and consequently a master in one of those three states. It first put itself under

the protection of Poland, which lorded it over them with too high a hand ; it then transferred itself to the Moscovite, who governed them, as much as possible, as slaves. The Ukranians had once the privilege of chusing a prince; under the name of general, but they were soon deprived of this right, and their general was nominated by the court of Moscow.

That station was then filled by a Polish gentleman, named Mazeppa, born in the palatinate of Podolia. He had been brought up a page to John Casimir, and had received some tincture of polite learning in his court. An intrigue which he had in his youth with the wife of a Polish gentleman having been discovered, the husband had him tied naked upon a wild horse, and turned adrift in that condition. The horse which had been brought out of the Ukraine returned to his own country, and carried Mazeppa with him half dead with hunger and fatigue. Some of the country people relieved him ; he lived a long time among them, and signalized himself in several excursions against the Tartars. The superiority of his understanding gave him great

consequence among the Cossacks, and, his reputation daily increasing, the czar was obliged to make him prince of Ukraine.

One day as he sat at table with the czar at Moscow, the emperor proposed to him to discipline the Cossacks, and render them more dependent. Mazeppa answered that the situation of Ukraine, and the genius of the nation, were insurmountable obstacles. The czar, who was somewhat overheated with wine, and could not always command his passion, called him traitor, and threatened to have him empaled.

Mazeppa, upon his return into Ukraine laid the plan of a revolt. The Swedish army, which soon after appeared upon the frontiers, opened him an easy way to it ; and he took the resolution of becoming independent, and raising himself a powerful kingdom out of Ukraine, and the ruins of the Russian empire. He was a man of great courage, of an enterprising genius, and indefatigable in labour, notwithstanding his great age. He entered into a secret league with the king of Sweden to hasten the downfall of the czar, and turn it to his own advantage.

The king appointed the rendezvous near the river Desna. Mazeppa promised to meet him there with thirty thousand men, warlike stores, provisions, and all his treasures which were immense. The Swedish army therefore marched towards that side, to the great regret of all the officers, who knew nothing of the king's treaty with the Cossack. Charles sent orders to Levenhaupt to bring up his troops and provisions with all speed into Ukraine, where he designed to pass the winter, that having secured himself in that country, he might conquer Moscovy the next spring; and he continued to advance towards the river Desna, which falls into the Boristhenes at Kiou.

The obstacles they had hitherto encountered on their march were trifles in comparison of those they met with on this new road. They were obliged to cross a forest of fifty leagues broad and full of marshes. General Lagercron, who marched before with five thousand men and pioneers, led the army thirty leagues eastward out of the right way. After marching four days, the king discovered Lagercron's mistake. With difficulty they struck into the right road again, but

left almost all their artillery and waggons behind, either stuck fast or buried in the mud.

In this painful manner they marched for twelve days, at the end of which the Swedes had consumed the little biscuit that was left, and the army then arrived quite spent with hunger and fatigue, upon the banks of the Desna, where Mazeppa had appointed to meet them ; but instead of the prince, they found a body of Moscovites advancing towards the other side of the river. The king was astonished, but resolved immediately to pass the Desna, and attack the enemy. The banks of the river were so steep, that they were obliged to let the soldiers down with cords. The river was crossed in the usual manner, partly by swimming, and partly by rafts hastily made. The body of Moscovites which arrived at the same time, was only eight thousand men ; so that they made but little resistance, and this obstacle was also surmounted.

Charles advanced farther into this wretched country, uncertain of his road and Mazeppa's fidelity. The Cossack at last appeared, but rather as a fugitive than a powerful ally, the Moscovites

having discovered and frustrated his designs. They had fallen upon the Cossacks and cut them in pieces ; his principal friends had been taken sword in hand, to the number of thirty, and broken on the wheel ; his towns reduced to ashes, his treasures plundered ; the provisions he was preparing for the king of Sweden seized, and himself scarcely able to escape, with six thousand men, and some few horses laden with gold and silver. However, he gave the king hopes of support, by his knowledge of this unknown country, and the affection of all the Cossacks, who, enraged against the Russians, came in troops to the camp, and brought them provisions.

Charles hoped, at least, that general Levenhaupt would come and repair this ill fortune. He was to bring with him about fifteen thousand Swedes, which were worth a hundred thousand Cossacks, with provisions of ammunition and subsistence. He arrived at last, but almost in the same condition as Mazeppa.

He had already passed the Boristhenes above Mohilou, and advanced twenty leagues further, on the road to Ukraine. He brought the king a

convoy of eight thousand waggons, with the money he had raised in Lithuania, on his way. When he had got towards Lesno, near the place where the rivers of Pronia and Sossa join to disembogue themselves far below into the Boristhenes, the czar appeared at the head of little short of forty thousand men.

The Swedish general, who had not quite sixteen thousand, resolved not to intrench. Their many victories had inspired the Swedes with so much confidence, that they never enquired the number of the enemy, but only where they were. Lavenhaupt therefore marched against them, without hesitation, on the seventh of October, 1708, in the afternoon. In the first assault, the Swedes killed fifteen hundred Moscovites. The czar's army fell into confusion, and fled on all sides. The emperor of Russia saw he was upon the point of being entirely defeated. He perceived that the safety of his dominions depended upon the action of that day, and that he was utterly undone, if Levenhaupt joined the king of Sweden with a victorious army.

As soon as he saw his troops begin to fall back,

he ran to the rear-guard, where the Cossacks and Kalmucks were posted: I charge you, said he, to fire upon every man that runs away, and even to kill me, should I be so cowardly as to turn my back. From thence he returned to the van, and rallied his troops in person, assisted by the princes Menzicow and prince Gallitsin. Levenhaupt, who had pressing orders to join his master, chose rather to continue his march than renew the fight, thinking he had done enough to discourage the enemy from pursuing.

At eleven the next morning the czar attacked him on the side of a morass, and extended his army, to surround him. The Swedes formed a front on every side, and the fight lasted two hours with equal obstinacy. The Moscovites lost three times as many men, but still kept their ground, and the victory was indecisive. At four in the afternoon general Bayer brought the czar a reinforcement of troops. The battle was then renewed, for the third time, with more fury and slaughter than ever, and lasted till night. At last numbers prevailed. The Swedes were broken, routed, and driven to their very baggage. Le-



venhaupt rallied his troops behind his waggon, and though the Swedes were conquered, they did not fly. They were about nine thousand in number, and not a single man ran away. The general ranged them as easily in order of battle, as though they had never been beaten.

The czar, on the other side, passed the night under arms, and commanded his officers, under pain of being cashiered, and his soldiers, under pain of death, not to stir for plunder.

The next morning, at day-break, he ordered a new attack. Levenhaupt had retired to an advantageous ground at some miles distance, after having spiked part of his cannon, and set fire to his waggon.

The Moscovites came time enough to hinder the whole convoy from being consumed by the flames; they seized about six thousand waggon, which they saved. The czar, who was desirous of completing the defeat of the Swedes, sent one of his generals, whose name was Phlug, to fall upon them again the fifth time. This general offered them an honourable capitulation. Levenhaupt refused it, and the fifth battle was as bloody

as the former. Of nine thousand soldiers which he had left, he lost one half, and the other remained unbroken. At length night coming on, Levenhaupt, after having sustained five battles against forty thousand men, passed the Sossa, followed by about five thousand men, who remained. The czar lost nearly ten thousand men in these five engagements, in which he had the glory of conquering the Swedes, and Levenhaupt that of disputing the victory for three days, and retreating unbroken at last. He then reached his master's camp, with the honour of having made so good a defence, but bringing with him neither ammunition nor army.

The king of Sweden thus found himself without provisions, or communication with Poland, surrounded by enemies in the midst of a country where he had scarce any other resource than his courage.

In this extremity, the memorable winter of 1709, which was still more terrible on those frontiers of Europe than in France, carried off part of his army. Charles resolved to brave the seasons, as he had done his enemies, and ventured to make

long marches with his troops during this fatal frost. It was in one of these marches that two thousand of his men fell dead from the cold before his eyes. The cavalry had no boots; the infantry no shoes, and almost without clothes. They were forced to make stockings of the skins of beasts, in the best manner they could, and frequently had not bread to eat. They were obliged to throw the greater part of their cannon into quagmires and rivers, for want of horses to drag them. This once flourishing army was reduced to twenty-four thousand men, ready to perish for hunger. They no longer received news from Sweden, nor were able to send thither. In this state, one officer alone complained. How, said the king, are you uneasy at being so far from your wife? if you are a true soldier, I will carry you so far, that you shall scarce hear from Sweden once in three years.

The marquis de Brancas, who was afterwards ambassador to Sweden, told me that a soldier ventured, with a murmur, to present the king, in the face of the whole army, with a piece of bread that was black and mouldy, made of barley and

oats, the only food they then had, nor sufficient even of this. The king received the bread without the least emotion, eat it entirely up, and coldly said to the soldier, It is not good, but it may be eaten. This little turn, if any thing can be called little, that serves to increase respect and confidence, contributed more than all the rest to make the Swedish army put up with extremes, which would have been intolerable under any other general.

In this situation he at last received news from Stockholm, but it was only to inform him of the death of his sister, the dutchess of Holstein, who was carried off by the small-pox in December 1708, in the 27th year of her age. She was a princess as mild and compassionate as her brother was impetuous in his disposition and implacable in his revenge. He had always entertained great affection for her, and was the more afflicted at her loss, as beginning now to grow unfortunate himself, he became a little more feeling.

He learnt also that they had raised troops and money pursuant to his orders; but nothing could reach his camp, as between him and Stockholm

it was nearly five hundred leagues, and an enemy superior in number to encounter.

The czar, who was as active as the king of Sweden, after having sent fresh forces into Poland, to the assistance of the confederates, united under general Siniawski, against Stanislaus, advanced very soon into Ukraine, in the midst of this severe winter, to oppose the king of Sweden. He continued there with the artful view of weakening the enemy by small engagements, well considering that the Swedish army must be ruined entirely at last, as it could not be recruited.

The cold there must have been excessive indeed, since it obliged the two enemies to agree to a suspension of arms. But upon the 1st of February they recommenced hostilities, in the midst of ice and snows.

After several small skirmishes, and some disadvantages, the king's army was reduced, in April, to eighteen thousand Swedes. Mazeppa alone, the Cossack prince, supplied them with the necessaries of life. Without his assistance the army must have perished through hunger and misery. The czar, in this crisis, proposed to

Mazeppa to return again into his service; but the Cossack continued faithful to his new ally, whether through fear of the terrible punishment of the wheel, by which his friends had perished, or whether from a desire of revenge.

Charles, with his eighteen thousand Swedes, had neither relinquished the design nor hope of penetrating to Moscow. Towards the end of May, he went to lay siege to Pultowa, upon the river Vorskla, the eastern extremity of Ukraine, thirteen long leagues from the Boristhenes. This territory belongs to the Zaporavians, the strangest people upon earth; being an assemblage of ancient Russians, Poles, and Tartars, professing a kind of christianity, and plundering, like the freebooters. They elect a chief, whom it is not uncommon with them to depose or murder. They suffer no women amongst them, but carry off all the children for twenty or thirty leagues round, and bring them up to their own mode of life. They always remain in the open air in summer, and in winter lay in spacious barns, that hold from four to five hundred men. They fear nothing, to be free, and for the most trivial booty face death with the

same intrepidity, as Charles XII. braved it, that he might bestow crowns. The czar ordered sixty thousand florins to be given them, in the hope that they would side with him. They took his money, and, thanks to the influence of Mazeppa, declared for Charles XII. but they were of little use to him, as they thought it absurd to fight for any thing besides plunder. It was more than could be expected if they did no harm; the utmost number who were of any use was two thousand. Ten of the chiefs were one morning presented to the king; but it was a great sacrifice that they were on this occasion prevailed on not to get drunk, as, with that, they generally begin the day. They were taken to the trenches, when they displayed their ability in firing with long carbines, for being stationed behind them, they would kill a man at the distance of six hundred paces. To this banditti, Charles added some thousand Walachians, which he had purchased from the khan of lesser Tartary.

He now laid siege to Pultowa with all the Zaporavian, Cossack, and Walachian troops, which added to his eighteen thousand Swedes,

made an army of about thirty thousand men, but out of condition, and in want of every necessary. The czar had erected a magazine at Pultowa. If the king took it, it would open his road to Moscow, and in the abundance he should then possess, he could at least wait for those succours he still expected from Sweden, Livonia, Pomerania, and Poland. His sole refuge being then in the conquest of Pultowa, he carried on the siege with vigour. Mazeppa, who had a correspondence in the town, assured him he would soon be master of it, and hope began to revive in his army. His soldiers looked upon the taking of Pultowa as the end of all their miseries.

The king perceived from the beginning of the siege, that he had taught his enemies the art of war. Prince Menzikow, notwithstanding all his precautions, threw fresh troops into the town, and the garrison by this means amounted to almost five thousand men.

They made sorties, sometimes successfully, and sprung a mine; but what rendered the city impregnable, was the approach of the czar, who was advancing with seventy thousand men. Charles XII.



went to reconnoitre them on the 27th of May, his birth day, and beat one of their detachments ; but as he was returning to his camp, he received a shot from a carbine, which pierced through his boot, and shattered the bone of his heel. There was not the least alteration observed in his countenance, by which it could be suspected that he was wounded; he continued calmly to give orders, and remained almost six hours on horseback afterwards. One of his domestics perceiving that the sole of his boot was bloody, ran for the surgeons; and the king's pain then began to be so acute, that they were forced to assist him in getting off his horse, and carry him into his tent. The surgeons when they had examined the wound, were of opinion that the leg must be cut off. The consternation of the army was inexpressible. A surgeon, named Neuman, who was better skilled, and more courageous than the rest, was positive, that by making deep incisions he could save the king's leg. Fall to work then immediately, said the king, cut boldly, fear nothing. He held the leg himself with both hands, looking upon the incisions that were made, as

though the operation had been performed upon another

As they were laying on the dressing, he gave orders for an assault the next morning, but the orders were scarcely given, before word was brought that the army of the enemy was advancing: he was therefore obliged to change his plan. Charles, wounded and incapable of acting, saw himself inclosed between the Boristhenes, and the river which runs to Pultowa, in a desert country, without any places of security, or ammunition, and opposed to an army, which prevented him either from retreating or being supplied with provisions. In this extremity he did not assemble any council of war, as might have been expected; but on the 7th of July at night sent for field-mareschal Renschild into his tent, and ordered him, without deliberation, and without uneasiness, to prepare to attack the czar the next morning. Renschild did not dispute his master's will, but went out, resolved to obey him. At the door of the king's tent he met count Piper, with whom he had long been at variance, as is often the case between the minister and the general.

Piper asked him if any thing new had happened. No, said the general coolly, and passed on to give his orders. As soon as Piper entered into the tent; Has Renschild told you any thing? said the king. Nothing, answered Piper. Well then, replied the king, I tell you that to-morrow we shall give battle. Count Piper was astonished at so desperate a resolution; but knew well that his master could not be prevailed on to change his opinion; he only expressed his astonishment by his silence, and left the king to sleep till break of day.

It was on the 8th of July 1709, that the decisive battle of Pultowa was fought between the two most famous monarchs then in the world; Charles XII. illustrious by a course of nine years victories, and Peter Alexiowitz, by nine years of fatigue, spent in training up his troops to an equality with the Swedes; the one glorious for having given away dominions, the other for having civilized his own: Charles, in love with danger, and fighting only for glory; Alexiowitz, not flying from danger, yet making war only for

interest: the Swedish monarch liberal from greatness of soul; the Moscovite never generous but for some private end: the one sober and continent beyond example, naturally magnanimous, and never cruel but once; the other not having yet worn off the roughness of his education and country, as terrible to his subjects, as wonderful to strangers, and too much addicted to excesses that shortened his days. Charles had the title of invincible, which one unhappy moment might deprive him of. The nations around had already given Peter Alexiowitz the name of great, which no defeat could take from, as no victories gave it to him.

To form a clear idea of this battle, and the place where it was fought, we must imagine Pultowa lying on the north, the camp of the king of Sweden on the south, drawing a little towards the east, his baggage about a mile behind him, and the river of Pultowa on the north of the town, running from east to west.

The czar had passed the river a league to the west of Pultowa, and was beginning to form his camp.

At day-break the Swedes appeared out of their trenches with four iron cannons for their whole artillery; the rest were left in the camp with about three thousand men, and four thousand remained with the baggage; so that the Swedish army which marched against the enemy was about twenty-five thousand strong, whereof not above twelve thousand were Swedish troops.

The generals Renschild, Roos, Levenhaupt, Slipenbak, Hoorn, Sparre, Hamilton, the prince of Wirtemberg, who was related to the king, and some others, most of whom had seen the battle of Narva, put the subaltern officers in mind of that day, when eight thousand Swedes had destroyed an army of eighty thousand Moscovites in an intrenched camp. The officers said the same to the soldiers, and all encouraged one another as they marched.

The king conducted the march, carried in a litter at the head of his infantry. A party of horse advanced, by his order, to attack that of the enemy. The battle began with this engagement at half past four in the morning. The enemy's cavalry were to the west, on the right of the

Moscovite camp; prince Menzikow and count Gollowin had placed them at intervals between redoubts fortified with cannon. General Slipenbak, at the head of the Swedes, fell upon them. All who have served in the Swedish troops know that it was almost impossible to resist the fury of their first shock. The Moscovite squadrons were broken and routed: the czar himself ran to rally them, and his hat was shot through with a musket ball; Menzikow had three horses killed under him; and the Swedes cried out victory.

Charles did not doubt but the battle was gained; he had dispatched general Creuts about midnight with five thousand horse, or dragoons, who were to take the enemy in flank, whilst he attacked them in front; but his misfortune was, that Creuts went out of the way, and did not appear. The czar, who had thought himself lost, had time to rally his cavalry. He in his turn fell upon the king's cavalry, which, not being supported by Creuts's detachment, was likewise broken, and Slipenbak himself taken prisoner in the engagement. At the same time, seventy-two cannons from the camp played upon the Swedish

horse, and the Russian foot opening from their lines, advanced to attack that of Charles.

The czar then detached prince Menzikow to post himself between Pultowa and the Swedes ; prince Menzikow executed his master's orders with dexterity and expedition ; and not only cut off the communication between the Swedish army and the troops remaining in the camp before Pultowa, but meeting with a corps de reserve of three thousand men, surrounded and cut them to pieces. If Menzikow made this manœuvre of himself, Russia was indebted to him for its safety ; if the czar ordered it, he was an adversary worthy Charles XII.

In the mean time, the Moscovite foot came out of their lines, and advanced, in order of battle, into the plain. On the other side, the Swedish horse rallied within a quarter of a league from the enemy's army ; and the king, assisted by his field-marechal Renschild, made a disposition for a general engagement.

He ranged what troops were left, in two lines ; his foot occupying the center, and his cavalry the two wings. The czar disposed his army in

the same manner ; he had the advantage of numbers, and seventy-two cannon, whilst the Swedes had no more than four, and began to want powder.

The emperor of Moscovy was in the center of his army, having then the title only of major-general, and seemed to serve under general Czermetow ; but he went as emperor from rank to rank, mounted on a Turkish horse, which was a present from the grand signior, animating the officers and soldiers, and promising every one rewards.

At nine in the morning, the battle was renewed ; one of the first discharges of the Moscovite cannon carried off the two horses of the king's litter ; two others were put to it, and a second volley broke the litter in pieces, and overturned the king. Of twenty-four drabans who were relays to carry him, twenty-one were killed. The Swedes, in consternation, lost ground, and the enemy's cannon continuing to mow them down, the first line fell back upon the second, and the second fled. In this last action the Swedish army was routed by a single line of ten thousand Rus-



sian infantry; so much were matters changed. All the Swedish writers say they should have gained the battle, if they had committed no mistakes: but all the officers say one great error was fighting at all, and a still greater, to shut themselves up in a miserable country, notwithstanding the opinion of the most experienced, against a warlike enemy of three times the strength of Charles XII. in number of men, and those resources which the Swedes stood in need of. The remembrance of Narva was the principal cause of Charles's misfortune at Pultowa.

The prince of Wirtemberg, general Renschild, and several principal officers, were already taken prisoners, the camp before Pultowa forced, and all in a confusion, which did not admit of any remedy. Count Piper, with all the officers of the council, had quitted the camp, and neither knew what to do, nor what was become of the king. They ran from one side of the plain to the other. A major Bere offered to lead them to the baggage; but the clouds of dust and smoke, which covered the field, and the confusion incidental to such a scene of desolation, carried them

strait to the counterscarp of the town, where they were all taken prisoners by the garrison.

The king would not fly, and could not defend himself. General Poniatowski chanced to be by him that instant ; he was a colonel of the Swedish guards of king Stanislaus, and a person of uncommon merit, whom his attachment to the person of Charles had engaged to follow him into Ukraine, without any post in the army. He was one, who, in all the occurrences of his life, and in dangers, where others, at most, would have only behaved with courage, shewed an immediate presence of mind, which was ever attended with success. He made a sign to two drabans, who took the king under their arms, and sate him on horseback, notwithstanding the excessive pain of his wound.

Poniatowski, though he had no command in the army, being made a general, on this occasion, by necessity, drew up five hundred horse about the king's person ; some of them drabans, others officers, and others private troopers. This collected troop, reanimated by the misfortune of their prince, made their way through more than ten Moscovite regiments, and conducted Charles

in the midst of the enemy the space of a league, to the baggage of the Swedish army.

The king, pursued in his flight, had his horse killed under him: colonel Gieta, though wounded, and his blood flowing fast, gave him his. Thus this conqueror, who could not ride during the battle, was twice placed on horseback in his flight.

This surprising retreat was of great consequence in such distress, but the king was under a necessity of flying still farther. They found, amongst the baggage, count Piper's coach, for the king never had one since he left Stockholm. They put him into it, and made towards the Boristhenes with all possible speed. The king, who, from the time he was set on horseback till he came to the baggage, had never spoken a word, then asked what was become of count Piper. They told him he was taken, with all the council. And general Renschild and the duke of Wirtemberg? added he. They are prisoners too, said Poniatowski. Prisoners to Russians! replied Charles, shrugging up his shoulders. Come on then, let us rather go to the Turks. They did

not observe however the least gloom on his countenance; and whoever had then seen him, and not known his condition, would have never suspected him to have been conquered and wounded.

Whilst he was getting off, the Moscovites seized upon his artillery in the camp before Pultowa, his baggage, and military chest, in which they found six millions in specie, the spoils of Poland and Saxony. Nearly nine thousand Swedes or Cossacks were killed in the battle, and about six thousand taken. There still remained about sixteen thousand men, including Swedes, Poles, and Cossacks, who fled towards the Boristhenes, under the command of general Levenhaupt. He marched one way with his fugitive troops, whilst the king took another with some horse. The coach in which he rode broke down on the way, and they set him again on horseback. To complete his misfortune, he wandered all night in a wood; there, his courage not being able any longer to supply his exhausted spirits, the pain of his wound becoming more insupportable by fatigue, and his horse falling under him from excessive weariness, he rested himself some hours at

the foot of a tree, in danger of being surprised, every moment, by the conquerors, who were seeking him on all sides.

At last, on the 9th of July, at night, he found himself upon the banks of the Boristhenes, where Levenhaupt had just arrived, with the remains of his army. The Swedes saw their king again, whom they fancied to have been dead, with a joy mixed with sorrow. The enemy drew nigh, and they neither had bridge to pass the river, time to make one, powder to defend themselves, nor provisions to save from perishing with hunger an army which had eaten nothing for two days. The remains of this army were, however, Swedes, and the conquered king was Charles XII. Almost all the officers imagined they were to make a firm stand there, against the Russians, and that they were either to conquer or die, on the banks of the Boristhenes. Such, undoubtedly, would have been the resolution of Charles, had he not been quite spent with fatigue. His wound was now come to a suppuration, attended with fever; and it has been observed, that men of the greatest intrepidity, when seized with the fever common in a

suppuration, generally lose that impulse of valour, which, like other virtues, requires a clear head. Charles was no longer himself; so I have been assured, and it is more than probable. He was dragged about like a sick man in a state of insensibility. By good fortune there was still left a sorry calash, which by mere chance they had brought along with them; this they embarked in one little boat, and the king and general Mazepa in another. The latter had saved several coffers full of money, but the current being very rapid, and a violent wind beginning to blow, the Cossack threw more than three parts of his treasures into the river, to lighten the boat. Mullen, the king's chancellor, and count Poniatowski, who was now more than ever necessary to the king, for his remarkable presence of mind under difficulties, crossed over in other barks with some of the officers. Three hundred troopers, and a very great number of Poles and Cossacks, relying upon the goodness of their horses ventured to pass the river by swimming. Their troop keeping close together, resisted the current, and broke the waves; but all who attempted to cross sepa-

rately, a little below, were carried away by the stream and sunk in the river. Of all the foot who tried to pass, not one got to the other side.

Whilst the wreck of the army was in this extremity, prince Menzikow came up with ten thousand horse, having each a foot soldier behind him. The carcasses of the Swedes that lay dead in the way, of their wounds, fatigue, and hunger, sufficiently pointed out to prince Menzikow the road which the bulk of the army had taken. The prince sent a trumpet to the Swedish general to offer him a capitulation. Four general officers were instantly sent by Levenhaupt to receive the law of the conqueror. Before that day sixteen thousand of king Charles's soldiers would have attacked all the forces of the Moscovite empire, and have perished to the last man, rather than have surrendered; but after a battle lost, and a flight of two days, no longer seeing their prince, who was constrained to fly himself, the strength of every soldier being exhausted, and their courage no longer supported by any hope, the love of life took place of intrepidity. There was only one colonel, Troutfetre, who, seeing the Mosco-

vites approach, placed himself at the head of a Swedish battalion to charge them, hoping that his example would animate the rest of the troops; but Levenhaupt was obliged to oppose this unavailing ardour. The capitulation was settled, and the whole army made prisoners of war. Some soldiers, in despair at falling into the hands of the Moscovites, threw themselves into the Boristhenes. Two officers of the brave Troutfetre's regiment killed themselves, the rest were made slaves. They all filed off in presence of prince Menzikow, laying their arms at his feet, as thirty thousand Moscovites had done nine years before at the king of Sweden's at Narva. But whereas, the king then sent back all the Moscovite prisoners, of whom he had no fear; the czar retained all the Swedes that were taken at Pultowa.

These unhappy creatures were afterwards dispersed in the czar's dominions, and particularly in Siberia, a vast province in the greater Tartary, which extends itself eastward to the frontiers of the Chinese empire. In this barbarous country, where even the use of bread was not known, the Swedes, made ingenious by necessity, exercised



the trades and arts of which they had some idea. All the distinctions, which fortune makes among men, were then banished. The officer, who could follow no handicraft trade, was forced to cleave and carry wood for the soldier, that was now turned taylor, draper, joiner, mason, or goldsmith, and got a subsistence by his labour. Some of the officers became painters and others architects; and some of them taught languages and mathematics; they even erected public schools, which in time acquired such consequence and celebrity, that children were sent thither for education from Moscow.

Count Piper, the king of Sweden's first minister, was a long time imprisoned at Petersburg. The czar was persuaded, with the rest of Europe, that this minister had sold his master to the duke of Marlborough, who had brought the arms of Sweden, which might have given peace to Europe, upon Moscovy. He made his captivity the more severe upon this supposition. That minister died some years after at Moscow, having received but little assistance from his family, which lived in great opulence in Stockholm, and ineffec-

tually lamented by his king, who would never condescend to offer a ransom for his minister, which he feared the czar would not accept; for there was never any cartel of exchange between Charles and the czar.

The emperor of Moscovy, elate with a joy he was under no concern to dissemble, received upon the field of battle the prisoners they brought him, in troops, and asked every moment, Where then is my brother Charles?

He paid the Swedish generals the compliment of inviting them to dine with him. Amongst other questions, he asked general Renschild, What number the troops of the king his master might amount to before the battle? Renschild answered, that the king only kept the list of them, which he never communicated to any one; but he thought the whole might be about thirty thousand men, whereof eighteen thousand were Swedes, and the rest Cossacks. The czar seemed surprised, and asked how they durst venture to penetrate into so distant a country, and lay siege to Pultowa with such a handful of men! We were not always consulted, answered the

Swedish general, but, as faithful servants, we obeyed our master's orders, without ever contradicting them. The czar, upon this answer, turned round toward certain courtiers, who had formerly been suspected of engaging in a conspiracy against him, Ah ! said he, see how a sovereign should be obeyed. And then taking a glass of wine, To the health, said he, of my masters in the art of war. Renschild asked, Who those were whom he honoured with so high a title ? You gentlemen, the Swedish generals, answered the czar. Your majesty then, replied the count, is very ungrateful to treat your masters so severely. When dinner was over, the czar ordered their swords to be restored to all the general officers, and conducted himself to them as a prince who had a mind to give his subjects lessons of generosity and civility, which he was not unacquainted with. This very prince who treated the Swedish generals so well, had all the Cossacks who fell into his hands, racked on the wheel.

Thus the Swedish army, which left Saxony so triumphant, was now no more. One half of them perished by want, and the other half were made

slaves or massacred. Charles XII. had in one day lost the fruit of nine years labour, and almost an hundred battles. He fled in a wretched calash, having major-general Hoord by his side, dangerously wounded. The rest of his troops followed, some on foot, others on horseback, and in waggons, across a desert, where they found neither huts, tents, men, animals, nor roads ; every thing was wanting there even to water itself. It was then the beginning of July ; the country situate in the forty-seventh degree ; the dry sand of the desert rendered the heat of the sun more insupportable ; the horses fell by the way, and the men were ready to die with thirst. A brook of muddy water was the only resource which they met with, and that was not till night was coming on ; they filled their leather bags with it, and it saved the lives of the king of Sweden's little troop. After five days march he found himself upon the banks of the river Hippanis, now called the Bogh, by the barbarians, who have spoiled even to their very names, the countries which the Grecian colonists formerly made to flourish. This river joins

the Boristhenes some miles lower, and falls along with it into the Black Sea.

Beyond the Bogh, towards the south, lies the little town of Oczakow, a frontier of the Turkish empire. The inhabitants seeing a troop of soldiers, whose dress and language they were strangers to, coming towards them, refused to carry them to Oczakow without an order from Mahomet Pacha, the governor of the town. The king sent an express to the governor to ask a passage. The Turk not knowing what to do in a country where a false step very often costs a man his life, durst take nothing upon himself without having first the permission of the seraskier of the province, who resides at Bender in Bessarabia. While this permission was waiting for, the Russians who had taken the king's army prisoners, had passed the Boristhenes, and were approaching to take him also. At last the pacha of Oczakow sent to tell the king that he would furnish him with a small bark for his own person and two or three of his suite. In this extremity the Swedes took by force what they could not ob-

tain by fair means. Some of them went to the opposite shore in a little skiff, seized some boats, and brought them to their side. To this they owed their safety; for the proprietors of these Turkish boats fearful of losing an opportunity of great profit, came in crowds to offer their services. Precisely at the same time arrived a favourable answer from the seraskier of Bender; and the king had the mortification to see five hundred of his suite laid hold of by the enemy, whose insulting taunts he could clearly distinguish. The pacha of Oczakow, asked his pardon, by an interpreter, for the delays which had occasioned the taking those five hundred men prisoners, and besought him not to complain of it to the grand signior. Charles promised him he would not, but not without reprimanding him as if he had been speaking to one of his own subjects.

The commander of Bender, who was also seraskier, a title which answers to that of general, and pacha of the province which signifies governor and intendant, quickly sent an aga to compliment the king, and offer him a magnificent

tent, with provisions, baggage waggon, conveniences, officers, and all the suite requisite to conduct him handsomely to Bender : for it is customary with the Turks not only to defray the charges of ambassadors to the place of their residence, but plentifully to supply the necessity of such princes as take refuge amongst them, during the time of their stay.

## BOOK V.

*State of the Ottoman Porte. Charles resides near Bender. His employment. Intrigues at the Porte. His designs. Augustus restored to his throne. King of Denmark makes a descent on Sweden. All Charles's other territories are invaded. The czar makes rejoicings at Moscow. Affair of Pruth. History of the czarina, who from a country girl became empress.*

**ACHMET III.** at that time governed the Turkish empire. He had been placed upon the throne in 1703, in the room of his brother Mustapha, by a revolution similar to that which in England, transferred the crown from James II. to his son-in-law William. Mustapha being governed by his mufti, whom the Turks abhorred, made the whole empire rise against him. His army by means of which he thought to punish the malcontents went over to them. He was seized, deposed in form, and his brother taken from the seraglio to be made sultan, without scarcely one



drop of blood being spilt upon the occasion. Achmet shut up the deposed sultan in the seraglio at Constantinople, where he lived several years after, to the great surprise of Turkey, which had been used to see the dethronement of her princes immediately followed by their death.

The only reward the new sultan bestowed for a crown, which he owed to the ministers, generals, officers of the janizaries, and in a word, to those who had a hand in the revolution, was to put them all to death one after another, for fear they should thereafter attempt a second. By sacrificing so many brave men, he weakened the forces of the empire, but added strength to his throne, at least for some years. From this time his mind was bent upon amassing treasures, and he was the first Ottoman that had the courage to make a small alteration in the money, and impose new taxes ; but he was obliged to drop both of these enterprizes, for fear of a revolt : for the rapacity and tyranny of the grand signior is scarce ever felt by any but the officers of the empire, who, whatever they are, are the domestic slaves of the sultan ; but the rest of the mussulmans live

in profound security, without danger of their lives, fortunes, or liberty.

Such was the emperor of the Turks, to whom the king of Sweden fled for refuge: he had no sooner set foot upon his territories, than he wrote to him a letter, dated 13th July, 1709. Many different copies are in circulation, but they are all considered as inaccurate. There are none, however, of those which I have seen, which are not written in a haughtiness of style far more conformable to his courage than to his situation. The sultan wrote him no answer till towards the end of September.

The pride of the Ottoman Porte made Charles XII. now sensible of the difference there was between an emperor of the Turks, and a king of part of Scandinavia, a Christian, vanquished and fugitive. As for the rest, all those letters which it rarely happens that kings write themselves are mere formalities, neither give an insight into the characters of the sovereigns nor their affairs.

Charles XII. in Turkey, was in fact neither more nor less than a captive honourably treated, he notwithstanding conceived the design of turning

the Ottoman arms upon his enemies. He already flattered himself with the idea of reducing Poland again under the yoke, and subduing Russia. He had sent an envoy to Constantinople ; but he who served him most essentially in his vast designs was count Poniatowski, who went to Constantinople without a mission, and soon rendered himself necessary to the king, agreeable to the Porte, and ultimately dangerous to the grand viziers themselves. One of those who entered into his designs with the greatest ability, was Fonseca, a Portuguese physician, and jew, settled at Constantinople, a learned and ingenious person, who well knew what he was about, and perhaps the only philosopher of his nation. His profession procured him access to the Ottoman Porte, and oftentimes the confidence of the viziers.

I was well acquainted with him at Paris, where he confirmed all the following particulars. Count Poniatowski told me himself, both verbally and in writing, that he had succeeded in bringing about a correspondence with the sultana Valide, mother of the reigning emperor, formerly ill-treated by her son, but who was now beginning

to obtain some ascendancy in the seraglio. A jew who had frequent access to this princess, was incessantly recounting the king of Sweden's exploits which she heard with visible pleasure. The sultana, from a secret predilection which almost all women feel in favour of extraordinary men, though they have not seen them, spoke loudly in the seraglio in favour of the prince, whom she termed her lion. How soon do you intend, would she sometimes say to the sultan her son, to assist my lion in devouring the czar? She even so far outstepped the austere seraglio laws as to write several letters to the count Poniatowski, in whose hands they still are, at the time of my writing this history.

The king was, however, honourably conducted to Bender, through the desert formerly called the wilderness of the Getae. The Turks took care that nothing should be wanting upon the road to make his journey agreeable. Many Poles, Swedes, and Cossacks, that had made their escape one after another out of the hands of the Moscovites, came by different ways to increase his train upon the road. When he arrived at Bender, he had

with him 1800 men, who were all fed and lodged, they and their horses, at the expence of the grand signior.

The king chose to encamp near Bender rather than reside in the town. The seraskier Jussuf Pacha, caused a magnificent tent to be pitched for him, and tents were also provided for all the lords of his retinue. Some time after the king built a house in this place, his officers followed the same example, and the soldiers raised barracks, so that the camp by degrees became a little town. The king, not being yet cured of his wound, was obliged to have a carious bone taken out of his foot; but, as soon as he was able to mount a horse, he renewed his usual fatigues, rising always before the sun, tiring three horses a day, and exercising his soldiers. His only amusement was now and then playing at chess. If petty occurrences shew the characters of men, it will not be irrelevant to observe, that he always kept the king on the move, making more use of that than of any of the other men, and thereby uniformly lost.

At Bender he found plenty of every thing; a

rare circumstance for a vanquished and fugitive prince; for besides provisions more than sufficient, and the five hundred crowns a day which he received from the Ottoman munificence, he likewise drew money from France, and borrowed of the merchants at Constantinople. Part of this money was employed in carrying on intrigues in the seraglio, in purchasing the favour or procuring the ruin of the viziers. The rest he distributed profusely among his officers, and the janizaries who acted as his guards at Bender. Grothusen his favourite and treasurer was the dispenser of his liberalities. He was a man, who contrary to the custom of persons in that station, was as much pleased with giving as his master. He one day brought him an account of sixty thousand crowns in two lines, ten thousand given to the Swedes and janizaries by the generous orders of his majesty, and the rest consumed by myself. See, said the king, how I like my friends should give in their accompts. Mullern makes me read whole pages for the sum of ten thousand francs. But I like Grothusen's laconic style much better. One of his old officers, thought to be a

little covetous, complained to the king that he gave all to Grothusen. I give money, replied the king, to none but those who know how to use it. This generosity often reduced him to having not wherewith to give. A better economy in his liberalities had been more for his advantage, and not less honourable, but it was this prince's failing to carry every virtue to an extreme.

Great numbers of strangers went from Constantinople to see him. The Turks and neighbouring Tartars came thither in crowds; all respected and admired him. His rigid abstinence from wine, and his regularity in attending public prayers twice a day, made them say he is a true mussulman, and they were impatient to march with him to the conquest of Moscovy.

During his want of employment at Bender, where he staid longer than he thought for, he insensibly acquired a taste for books. Baron Fabricius, the duke of Holstein's gentleman, an amiable young man, of such gaiety of temper, and an easy turn of wit as takes with princes, was the person that prevailed upon him to read. He had been sent as envoy to him at Bender, to

take care of the interests of the young duke of Holstein, and carried his point by making himself so agreeable. He had read all the good French authors, and persuaded the king to have read to him the tragedies of P. Corneille, and Racine, and the works of Despreaux. The king had no relish for the satires of the latter, nor are they by any means his best performances ; but he much admired his other writings. When he heard that passage in his eighth satire in which the author makes Alexander a fool and a madman, he tore out the leaf.

Of all the French tragedies, Mithridates was that which pleased him most, because the situation of that king, vanquished and breathing vengeance, resembled his own. He pointed out with his finger to M. Fabrice the places that struck him, but would read none of them aloud, nor even venture to speak a word in French. Nay, when he afterwards saw at Bender M. Desaleurs, the French ambassador at the Porte, a person of distinguished merit, but acquainted only with his mother-tongue, he answered him in Latin ; and upon Desaleurs protesting that he did not understand four words in that language, the king rather than talk French called for an interpreter.



Thus was Charles XII. employed at Bender, where he waited till an army of Turks should come to his assistance. His envoy presented memorials in his name to the grand vizier, and Poniatowski supported them by that credit which he understood how to assume. The insinuation succeeded throughout ; he always appeared in a Turkish dress which procured him free access every where. The grand signior presented him with a purse of a thousand ducats, and the grand vizier said to him, I will take your king in one hand and a sword in the other, and will take him to Moscow at the head of two hundred thousand men. This grand vizier was Chorlouli Ali Pacha ; he was son of a peasant in the village of Chourlou. Such an extraction among the Turks, is considered no reproach ; they know nothing of nobility, neither as attached to employments, nor as consisting in title. Services alone are considered every thing. It is the custom throughout almost all the east, and a very natural and good custom it would be if dignities could only be conferred on merit ; but viziers in general are but the creatures of a black eunuch, or of a favourite slave.

The prime minister soon altered his tone. The king could not do other than negotiate, and the czar could bestow money ; he did bestow it freely, and the very same too which Charles XII. made use of. The military chest taken at Pul-towa, supplied new arms against the conquered : making war against the Russians was now entirely out of the question. The czar's credit was omnipotent at the Porte, which granted such honours to his envoy as the Moscovite ministers had never before enjoyed at Constantinople. He was suffered to have a seraglio, that is, a palace in the quarters of the Franks, and to communicate with the foreign ministers. Nay the czar thought he had power enough to demand that general Mazeppa should be delivered up to him, as Charles XII. had caused the unfortunate Patkul to be surrendered into his hands. Chourlouli Ali-Pacha could no longer refuse any thing to a prince who backed his demands with millions. Thus the same grand vizier, who before had made a solemn promise to carry the king of Sweden into Moscovy with two hundred thousand men, had the assurance to make him a proposal

of consenting to the sacrifice of General Mazeppa. Charles was enraged at the question. However it is not certain, how far the vizier would have carried the matter, had not Mazeppa, who was then seventy years of age, died just at this critical moment. The king's grief and resentment were very much augmented, when he understood that Tolstoy, now became the czar's ambassador at the Porte, was served in public by the Swedes that had been made slaves at Pultowa, and that these brave soldiers were daily sold in the market at Constantinople. Besides, the Moscovite ambassador openly declared, that the mussulman troops at Bender, were placed there rather as a guard upon the king than to do him honour.

Charles abandoned by the grand vizier, and conquered by the czar's money in Turkey as he had been by his arms in Ukraine, found himself deluded, scorned by the Porte, and in some respect a prisoner among the Tartars. His attendants began to despair. Himself alone remained firm, and did not shew the least dejection of spirit no not for a moment. He imagined the sultan was ignorant of the intrigues of Chourlouli Ali

his grand vizier; he resolved to make him acquainted with them, and Poniatowski undertook this bold commission. The grand signior goes every Friday to the mosque with his solacks, a kind of guard whose turbans are ornamented with feathers so high, that they hide the sultan from the eyes of the people. When any one has a petition to present to the grand signior, he endeavours to mix himself among these guards, and hold the petition up in the air. Sometimes the sultan vouchsafes to take it himself; but he more frequently orders an aga to take charge of it, and afterwards upon his return from the mosque, causes the petitions to be laid before him. There is no fear of any one's daring to importune him with trifling and unnecessary petitions; for at Constantinople they write less in a whole year than at Paris in a single day. Much less does any one venture to present petitions against the ministers, to whom for the most part, the sultan transmits them without reading. Poniatowski had no other way to convey the king of Sweden's complaints to the grand signior. He drew up a remonstrance against the grand vizier. M. de

Feriol, who was at that time French ambassador, who told me the fact, got it translated into Turkish. A Greek was hired to present it; he, mingling himself among the grand signior's guards, held up the paper so high, for so long a time, and made such a noise, that the sultan perceived it, and took the memorial himself. The same means of presenting memorials to the sultan against this vizier, were frequently had recourse to. Leloint, a Swede, delivered another shortly afterwards. Charles XII. in the Turkish empire, was reduced to the necessity of resorting to the same resources as an oppressed subject.

Some days after, the sultan, in answer to the king of Sweden's complaints, sent him twenty-five Arabian horses, one of which, that had carried his highness, was covered with a saddle and housing, enriched with precious stones, and the stirrups were of massive gold. This present was accompanied by an obliging letter, but conceived in general terms, and which gave reason to suspect that the minister had done nothing without the sultan's consent. Chourlouli also, who knew how to dissemble, sent five very curious horses to

the king. Charles, haughtily, said to the person who brought them, Go back to your master, and tell him, that I do not receive presents from my enemies.

M. Poniatowski, having already had the courage to get a petition presented against the grand vizier, then formed the bold design of deposing him. He knew the vizier was no favourite of the sultan's mother, and was the aversion both of Kislár Aga, the chief of the black eunuchs, and of the aga of the Janizaries; he encouraged all three to speak against him. It was very strange to see a Christian Pole, an unaccredited agent of a Swedish king, who had fled for refuge to the Turks, caballing almost publicly at the Porte against a vice-roi of the Ottoman empire, and such an one too as was both useful to, and a favourite of, his master. Poniatowski would never have succeeded, and the bare attempt would have cost him his life, had not a stronger power than all those in his interests given the last blow to the grand vizier Chourlouli's fortune.

The Sultan had a young favourite, who has since governed the Ottoman empire, and was

killed in Hungary in 1716, at the battle of Peterwaradin, gained over the Turks by prince Eugene of Savoy. His name was Coumourgi Ali-Pacha. His birth was much the same with that of Chourlouli. He was the son of a coalheaver, as the word coumourgi signifies; for coumour is the same as coal in the Turkish language. The emperor Achmet II. uncle of Achmet III. meeting Coumourgi when he was a child, in a forest near Adrianople, was so struck with his great beauty, that he sent him to the seraglio. Mustapha, Mahomet's eldest son and successor, was much taken with him, and Achmet III. made him his favourite. He had then no other place but that of selictar aga, sword-bearer to the crown. His early youth would not admit of his pretending to the office of grand vizier, but his ambition inclined that way. The Swedish faction could never gain the inclinations of this favourite. He was at no time a friend to king Charles, or any other christian prince, or their ministers: but on this occasion, he served Charles XII. without designing it. He joined with the sultana Valide, and the great officers of the Porte, to contrive

the downfall of Chourlouli, whom they all hated. This old minister, who had long, and well, served his master, fell a sacrifice to the caprice of a boy, and the intrigues of a stranger. He was deprived of his dignity and his wealth ; his wife, who was daughter to the last sultan Mustapha, was taken from him, and himself banished to Caffa, formerly Theodosia, in Crim Tartary. The bull, that is to say, the seal of the empire, was given to Numan Couprougli, grandson to the great Couprougli, who took Candia. This new vizier was what misinformed christians would hardly believe of a Turk, a man of inflexible virtue, and a scrupulous observer of the law ; and he often opposed justice to the sultan's will. He would not hear of a war against Moscovy, which he treated as unjust and unnecessary. But the same attachment to law, which hindered him from waging war against the czar, contrary to the faith of treaties, made him regard the duty of hospitality with respect to the king of Sweden. The law, said he to his master, forbids thee to invade the czar, who has done you no injury ; but commands thee to suc-



cour the king of Sweden, who is unfortunate in thy dominions. He sent his majesty eight hundred purses, (a purse is worth five hundred crowns) and advised him to return peaceably into his own dominions, through the territories of the emperor of Germany, or else in some French vessels, then lying at the port of Constantinople, and which M. de Feriol, the French ambassador at the Porte, offered Charles to transport him to Marseilles. Count Poniatowski communicated more frequently than ever with this minister, and acquired in his negotiations a superiority, which the Moscovite gold could not contend against, with an incorruptible vizier. The Russian faction conjectured therefore, that its best resource would be to get rid of so able a negotiator by poison. One of his domestics being accordingly gained over, was to administer the poison in his coffee. The crime was discovered before it had been carried into effect; and the poison being detected in a little phial in the servant's possession, it was taken to the grand signior. The prisoner was found guilty in full divan, and con-

demned to the galleys, as Turkish justice never punishes by death those crimes which have not been executed.

Charles XII. ever persuaded that he should sooner or later succeed in making the Turkish empire declare war against Russia, would consent to no proposition which tended to his peaceable return to his own states. He was incessantly representing, as formidable to the Turks, the very czar he had so long held in contempt; his emissaries continually intimated that Peter Alexiowitz's design was to make himself master of the Black sea; and that after he had subjugated the Tartars, he would do as much for Crim Tartary. At one moment his representations animated the Turks to revenge, and the next they were rendered ineffectual by the Russian minister.

While Charles XII. was thus making his destiny dependant upon the will of the vizier, was receiving favours and affronts from a foreign power, presenting memorials to the Sultan, and subsisting on his liberality, in a desert, all his enemies had aroused to the attack of his states.

The battle of Pultowa was the immediate sig-

nal of a revolution in Poland. King Augustus returned thither, protesting against his abdication, and the peace of Altranstad, and publicly accusing Charles XII. whom he now no longer feared, of robbery and cruelty. He imprisoned Imhof, and his plenipotentiaries, who had signed his abdication, as if in so doing they had exceeded their orders, and betrayed their master. His Saxon troops, that had been the pretence of his dethronement, brought him back to Warsaw, attended by most of the Polish palatines, who, having formerly sworn fidelity to him, had afterwards done the same to Stanislaus, and were come to do it again to Augustus. Siniawsky himself came into his measures, and forgetting the view of making himself king, was content to remain grand general of the crown. Flemming, his first minister, who had been compelled, for a time, to quit Saxony, for fear of being delivered up as Patkul was, then contributed by his management to bring over great part of the Polish nobility to his master.

The pope absolved his people from the oath of allegiance they had sworn to Stanislaus. This

step of the holy father, seasonably taken and supported by Augustus's forces, was of no small weight; it established the interest of the court of Rome in Poland, where they then had no inclination to dispute with the sovereign pontiff the chimerical right of meddling with the temporalities of kings. Every one willingly returned to the domination of Augustus, and received, without disinclination, an useless absolution which the nuncio did not fail to represent as necessary.

Charles's power, and the grandeur of Sweden, were now drawing towards their final close. Above ten crowned heads had for some time beheld, with fear and envy, the Swedish government extending itself far beyond its natural bounds, to the other side of the Baltick, from the Dwina to the Elbe. Charles's misfortunes, and his absence, awakened the interests and jealousies of all these princes, which had for a long season been laid asleep by treaties, and the inability to break them.

The czar, who was more powerful than all of them put together, making immediate use of his

victory, took Wibourg, and all Carelia, overrun Finland with troops, sat down before Riga, and sent an army into Poland to assist Augustus in the recovery of his throne. This emperor was at that time what Charles had been formerly, the arbiter of Poland and the north; but he consulted only his own interests; whereas Charles had never any other views than those of revenge and glory. The Swedish monarch had succoured his allies, and crushed his enemies, without requiring the least fruit of his victories: the czar conducting himself more like a prince, and less like a hero, would not assist the king of Poland, but upon condition that Livonia should be delivered up to him and that this province, for the sake of which Augustus had kindled the war, should belong to the Moscovites for ever.

The king of Denmark, forgetting the treaty of Travendal, as Augustus had the treaty of Altranstad, from that time thought of making himself master of the dutchies of Holstein and Bremen, to which he renewed his pretensions. The king of Prussia formerly had a title which he now felt an inclination to revive, to Swedish Pomerania.

The duke of Mecklenburgh was provoked to see Sweden still in possession of Wismar, the finest city in his dutchy. This prince was to marry the emperor of Moscovy's niece, and the czar only wanted a pretence to establish himself in Germany, after the example of the Swedes. George, the elector of Hanover, on his side, likewise wanted to enrich himself with Charles's spoils. The bishop of Munster would also have been glad to make the best of some pretensions, if he had had the power.

There were about twelve or thirteen thousand Swedes, who defended Pomerania, and the other countries which Charles possessed in Germany. Here was to have been the seat of the war. This storm alarmed the emperor and his allies. It is a law of the empire, that whoever invades one of his provinces, is reputed an enemy to the whole Germanic body.

But there was a still much greater difficulty. All these princes, except the czar, were then in league against Lewis XIV. whose power had for some time been as formidable to the empire as that of king Charles.

Germany, at the beginning of the century, found itself hard pressed from the south to the north, between the armies of France and Sweden. The French had passed the Danube, and the Swedes the Oder. If their forces, victorious as they then were, had joined, the empire was lost. But the same fatality that ruined Sweden had also humbled France. However, Sweden was not without resources, and Lewis XIV. carried on the war with vigour, though without success. Had Pomerania, and the dutchy of Bremen, become the seat of war, it was to be feared the empire would have been the worse for it, and, being weakened on that side, would be less able to hold out against Lewis XIV. To remove this inconvenience, the emperor, the princes of Germany, queen Anne of England, and the states general of the united provinces, concluded, at the Hague, about the end of the year 1709, one of the most singular treaties that ever was signed.

It was stipulated by these powers, that the war against Sweden should not be in Pomerania, nor in any of the provinces of Germany, but that the enemies of Charles XII. might attack him every

where else. The king of Poland and the czar themselves acceded to this treaty, and caused an article to be inserted, as extraordinary as the treaty itself, viz. that the 12,000 Swedes which were in Pomerania should not depart thence to defend their other provinces.

To secure the execution of this treaty, it was proposed, for maintaining this imaginary neutrality, to raise an army, which was to encamp on the banks of the Oder. A strange and unheard of army, raised to prevent a war, would have been a singular novelty. Nay, those who were to furnish the army's pay, were for the most part materially interested in bringing about the war they pretended to avert. The treaty ran, that it was to consist of the troops of the emperor, king of Prussia, elector of Hanover, the landgrave of Hesse and bishop of Munster.

The event of this project was such, as might naturally be expected. It was never carried into execution. The princes, who were to furnish their contingents for raising this army, contributed nothing; not two regiments were formed: there was much talk of a neutrality, but nobody



observed it and all the northern princes, who had any controversy with the king of Sweden, were left at full liberty to dispute who should have his spoils.

In these conjunctures, the czar, after having quartered his forces in Lithuania, and ordered the siege of Riga, returned to Moscow, to show his people a sight as new as any thing he had yet done in his kingdom: it was a triumph very little inferior to that of the ancient Romans. He made his entry into Moscow on the first of January 1710, under seven triumphal arches erected in the streets, and adorned with all that the climate could furnish and the commerce, flourishing from his care, could collect there. The procession began with a regiment of guards, followed by the artillery taken from the Swedes at Lesnów and Pultowa, each drawn by eight horses, covered with scarlet housings reaching down to the ground; then came the standards, kettle-drums and colours won at these two battles, carried by the officers and soldiers who had taken them: all these spoils were followed by the czar's finest troops. After they had filed off, appeared,

in a chariot made for that purpose, the litter of Charles XII. found in the field of battle at Pultowa, broken to pieces by two cannon-shot. Behind this litter marched all the prisoners two by two; among them was count Piper, prime minister of Sweden, the famous mareschal Renschild, count Levenhaupt, the generals Slipenbak, Stackenberk, and Hamilton and all the officers and soldiers who were afterwards dispersed in great Russia. They were immediately followed by the czar, on the same horse he rode at the battle of Pultowa. A little behind him appeared the generals who had a share in the success of this battle; after them came another regiment of guards and the waggons loaded with Swedish ammunition brought up the rear.

This solemn procession moved on to the ringing of all the bells in Moscow, with the sound of drums, kettle-drums, trumpets and an infinite number of musical instruments, answering each other, with volleys of 200 pieces of cannons, and the acclamations of 500,000 men, who, at every stop the czar made in his triumphal entry, cried, God preserve our father, the emperor.

This impressive cavalcade augmented the people's veneration for his person, and perhaps made him appear greater in their eyes, than all the real good he had done them. He however continued the blockade of Riga and the generals made themselves masters of the rest of Livonia and part of Finland. At the same time, the king of Denmark came with his entire fleet to make a descent upon Sweden, where he landed 17,000 men, whom he left under the command of count Reventlau.

Sweden was at that period governed by a regency, composed of some senators whom the king established at his departure from Stockholm. The senatorial body, which looked upon the government as of right belonging to them, was jealous of the regency and the state suffered by these divisions: but when, upon the first news they received at Stockholm, after the battle of Pultowa, that the king was at Bender, at the mercy of the Turks and Tartars, and that the Danes had made a descent upon Schonen, and taken the town of Helsimbours, all jealousies vanished and they thought only of saving Sweden.

It began to be exhausted of its regular troops ; for, notwithstanding Charles had always made his great expeditions at the head of small armies, yet the innumerable battles he had been engaged in for nine years together, the constant necessity he was under of recruiting his forces and maintaining his garrisons and the standing army he was obliged always to have on foot in Finland, Ingria, Livonia, Pomerania, Bremen, and Verden ; had cost Sweden, during the course of the war, above 250,000 soldiers and there remained not so many as 8000 of the old troops, who, with the new forces, were the only defence of Sweden.

The nation is naturally warlike, and every people insensibly adopts the disposition of its king. From one end of the country to the other nothing was talked of but the prodigious exploits of Charles and his generals and of the old corps that fought under them at Narva, on the Dwina, at Crassau, Pultusk, and Hollosin. The lowest of the Swedes hence assumed a spirit of emulation and glory. Affection for their king, compassion for his misfortunes, and their implacable aversion to the Danes, gave a new energy to that impres-

sion. In several other countries the peasants are slaves, or treated as such ; here making a part of the state, they look upon themselves as citizens and entertain higher sentiments ; so that these forces in a little time became the best troops of the north.

General Steinbock, by order of the regency, put himself at the head of 8000 old troops, and 12,000 of the new levies, to go in pursuit of the Danes, who ravaged all the country about Helsingberg and had already extended the levy of contributions some distance into the country.

There was neither time nor opportunity to clothe the militia in uniforms. Most of these labourers came in their smock-frocks, having pistols tied with cords to their girdles. Steinbock, at the head of this extraordinary army, came up with the Danes within three leagues of Helsingberg, on the 10th of March 1710. He wished to rest his troops for a few days, to intrench himself and give his new soldiers time to accustom themselves to the enemy ; but all the peasants insisted upon engaging the very day they arrived.

Some officers who were there, told me, they

saw them, almost to a man, foam with rage; so excessive is the national hatred of the Swedes to the Danes. Steinbock took advantage of this disposition, which, in a day of battle, is of as much service as military discipline. The Danes were attacked and then was seen what perhaps is not to be paralleled by two more instances of the like kind, raw forces equalling, in the first onset, the intrepidity of old regiments. Two regiments of these undisciplined peasants cut the regiment of the king of Denmark's guards in pieces and left but ten men remaining.

The Danes being entirely routed, retreated under the cannon of Helsingborg. The passage from Sweden to Zealand is so short, that the king of Denmark received, the same day, at Copenhagen, the news of his army's defeat in Sweden and sent his fleet to bring off the remains of his troops. The Danes quitted Sweden with precipitation five days after the battle, but being unable to bring away their horses and not caring to leave them to the enemy, they killed them all in the environs of Helsingborg and set fire to their provisions, burning their corn and baggage and

leaving at Helsimberg 4000 wounded, the greatest part of whom died by the infection from so many dead horses and from want of provision, which their own countrymen deprived them of, to prevent its falling into the hands of the Swedes.

At the same time, the peasants of Dalecarlia, having, in the midst of their forests, heard that their king was prisoner in Turkey, sent a deputation to the regency of Stockholm and offered to go at their own expence, to the number of 20,000 men, to deliver their master out of the hands of his enemies. This proposal, which savoured more of courage and affection than practicability, was received with pleasure, notwithstanding it was rejected; nor did they fail to acquaint the king with it, when they sent the particulars of the battle of Helsimberg.

Charles received this comfortable news in his camp at Bender, in July 1710 and in a little time after, another accident confirmed him in his hopes.

The grand vizier Couprougli, who opposed his designs, was turned out after he had been two months in the ministry. Charles the XIIth's little

court and those who still adhered to him in Poland, gave out that he made and deposed the viziers and governed the Turkish empire from his retreat at Bender ; but he had no hand in the favourite's ruin. The rigid probity of the vizier was said to be the only cause of his fall. His predecessor did not pay the Janizaries out of the imperial treasury, but out of the money which arose from his extortion. Couprougli paid them out of the treasury. Achmet reproached him with preferring the interest of the subjects to that of the emperor. Thy predecessor Chourlouli, said he, could find other ways to pay my troops. The grand vizier answered, If he possessed the art of enriching your highness by rapine, it is an art which I think it a glory to be ignorant of.

The great secrecy that reigns in the seraglio, rarely suffers such discourses to transpire ; but this was known with Couprougli's disgrace. That vizier's freedom did not cost him his head, because true virtue often draws respect, even while it displeases. He had leave to retire to the island of Negropont. I learnt these particulars



by letters from my relation, M. de Brie, principal dragoman at the Ottoman Porte, and I relate them for the purpose of showing the spirit of that government.

After this, the grand signior recalled Baltagi Mahomet, pacha of Syria, who had been grand vizier before Chourlouli, from Aleppo. The baltagis of the seraglio, so called from Balta, which signifies an ax, are slaves employed to cut wood for the use of the princes of the blood and the sultanas. The vizier had been a baltagi in his youth and had ever since retained the name, according to the custom of the Turks, who are not ashamed to take the name of their first profession, or that of their father, or the place of their nativity.

At the time that Baltagi Mahomet was a servant in the seraglio, he had the good fortune to do some trivial service for prince Achmet, then a prisoner of state under his brother Mustapha. It is customary, that the princes of the Ottoman blood should have for their pleasure some women who are past child-bearing, which is very early the case of the Turkish women and yet suffi-

ciently beautiful to please. One of these female slaves, who had been much beloved by Achmet, he gave in marriage, upon his being made sultan, to Baltagi Mahomet. This woman, by her intrigues, made her husband grand vizier. Another intrigue deposed him and a third made him vizier again.

Baltagi Mahomet had no sooner received the seals of the empire, than he found the king of Sweden's interest predominant in the seraglio. The sultana Valide, Ali-Coumourgi, the grand signior's favourite, the Kiskar-Aga, chief of the black eunuchs and the aga of the Janisaries, were for war against the czar. The sultan was determined upon it, and the very first order he gave the grand vizier was to fall upon the Moscovites with 200,000 men. Baltagi Mahomet had never been in the field, but then he was by no means an idiot, as the dissatisfied Swedes have represented him. He told the grand signior, upon receiving from his hand a sabre set with precious stones, his highness knows that I have been brought up to use an ax to fell wood, and not a sword to command armies; I will endea-

your to serve thee in the best manner I am able, but if I fail of success, remember I have entreated thee not to lay it to my charge. The sultan assured him of his friendship, and the vizier prepared to obey him.

The first step of the Ottoman Porte was to imprison the Moscovite ambassador in the castle of seven towers. It is the custom of the Turks to begin with seizing the ministers of those princes against whom they declare war. Though strict observers of hospitality in every thing else ; in this they violate the most sacred law of nations. They commit this injustice under a pretence of equity, imagining, or being willing to have it believed, that they never undertake any war but what is just, because consecrated by the approbation of the mufti : upon this principle they look upon themselves as armed to chastise the infringers of treaties, which they often break themselves and think to punish the ambassadors of kings in enmity with them, as accomplices in the treachery of their masters.

To this may be added the ridiculous contempt they affect towards Christian princes and their

ambassadors, whom they look upon, for the most part, only as consuls of merchants.

The han of Crim Tartary, whom we call the khan, had orders to be in readiness with 40,000 Tartars. This prince reigns over Nogai, Budziack, part of Circassia, and all the Crim country known to antiquity by the name of Taurica Chersonesus, whither the Greeks carried their commerce and their arms, building large cities and whither the Genoese have since penetrated, when they were masters of the trade of Europe. In this country are to be seen the ruins of Grecian cities and some Genoese monuments, still subsisting, in the midst of ruin and desolation.

The khan is, by his own subjects, called emperor ; but notwithstanding this grand title, he is not the less a slave of the Porte. The Ottoman blood, of which the khans are descended and the right they pretend over the Turkish empire upon the extinction of the grand signior's race, makes their family respected and their persons formidable, even to the sultan himself. It is upon this account that the grand signior dares not destroy the race of the khans of Tartary ; but he hardly

ever suffers any of them to grow old upon the throne. Their steps are always watched by the neighbouring pachas; their territories encompassed with Janizaries; their inclinations crossed by the grand vizier and their designs ever suspected. If the Tartars complain of the khan, the Porte makes it a pretext to depose him; if he is beloved by them, it is a crime, for which he is sooner punished than the other. Thus all of them, in a manner, pass from the crown into banishment and finish their days at Rhodes, which is commonly their prison and their grave.

The Tartars, their subjects, are the greatest thieves of any people upon the face of the earth and yet, which is hardly to be conceived, they are at the same time the most hospitable. They travel fifty leagues out of the country to fall upon a caravan and destroy towns; but if any stranger whatever happens to pass through their country he is not only received and lodged every where, and his expences borne for him, but whatever place he comes to, the inhabitants strive who shall have the honour to make him their guest. The master of the house, his wife and daughters,

take a pride in waiting upon him. The Scythians, their ancestors, have transmitted to them this inviolable regard to hospitality; which they still retain, because the small number of strangers that travel among them and the low price of all kinds of provisions, makes this virtue not very burdensome.

When the Tartars go to war, in conjunction with the Ottoman army, they are maintained by the grand signior, but receive no other pay except their booty. This makes them better for pillage than for a regular engagement.

The khan, gained by the presents and intrigues of the king of Sweden, got leave that the general rendezvous of the troops might be at Bender under the eyes of Charles XII. to let him see the more clearly, that it was for his sake the war was undertaken.

The new vizier, Baltagi Mahomet, not being under the same engagements, would not flatter a foreign prince so far. He recalled the order and this great army was assembled at Adrianople. The rendezvous of a Turkish army, when the war is to be made against Christians, is always in

the vast and fertile plains of Adrianople. The troops drawn from Asia and Africa rest there and refresh themselves for some weeks; but the grand vizier, that he might take the czar by surprize, only allowed his army three days repose, and marched towards the Danube and thence to Bessarabia.

The Turkish troops are not at this time so formidable as they formerly were, when they conquered so many kingdoms in Asia, Africa and Europe. The bodily strength, valour, and number of the Turks, then triumphed over enemies less robust and worse disciplined than themselves. But now that the Christians understand the art of war better, they almost always beat the Turks in pitched battles, even with unequal forces. If the Ottoman empire has lately gained some conquests, it is only from the republic of Venice, esteemed more wise than warlike, defended by strangers and ill supported by the Christian princes, who are always divided among themselves.

The Janizaries and Spahis always make their attack in such disorder, that they are incapable

of hearing a word of command and never able to rally. Their cavalry, which should be excellent, considering the goodness and agility of their horses, cannot sustain the shock of the German cavalry. The infantry, in like manner, cannot use the bayonet at the end of the gun to advantage. Moreover, the Turks have no great general among them since Couprougli, who conquered the isle of Candia. A slave brought up in idleness and the silence of a seraglio, made a vizier by interest and a general against his inclinations, headed a raw army, without experience and without discipline, against Moscovite troops, trained to war for twelve years together and proud of having conquered the Swedes.

The czar, in all appearance, must have vanquished Baltagi Mahomet, but he committed the same fault in regard to the Turks, that the king of Sweden was guilty of in this case; that is, he treated his enemy with too much contempt. Upon the news of the Turkish preparations, he left Moscow and having given orders to convert the siege of Riga into a blockade, he drew up his army, to the number of 80,000 men, upon



the frontiers of Poland. With this army he began his march by Moldavia and Walachia, formerly the country of the Daci, but now inhabited by Greek Christians, tributaries to the grand signior.

Moldavia was at this period governed by prince Cantemir, by birth a Greek, who united the talents of the ancient Greeks, the science of literature and of arms. He traced his origin to the famous Timur, known by the name of Tamerlane. This root seemed beyond that of a Greek and the descent was proved from the name of the conqueror. Timur, said they, closely resembles Temir. The title of khan, which Timur held previously to his conquest of Asia, is discoverable in the name of Cantemir, therefore prince Cantemir must be a descendant of Tamerlane. Such is the foundation of most of their genealogies.

Whatever might have been Cantemir's ancestry, he was indebted for all his prosperity to the Ottoman Porte. Scarcely however had he been invested with his principality, than he betrayed the Turkish emperor, his benefactor, to the czar, from whom he had greater hopes of reward. He flattered himself, that the conqueror of

Charles XII. would easily triumph over a vizier of no account, who had never been in a war and who had made choice for his kiaia, that is to say, his next in command, of the intendant of the Turkish customs. He calculated, that all his people would side with him and the Grecian patriarchs encouraged him in his defection.

The czar therefore having concluded a secret treaty with this prince and received him into his army, advanced into the country and arrived in June, 1711, at the northern side of the river Hierasus, now Pruth, near Yassi, the capital of Moldavia.

As soon as the grand vizier received the news that Peter Alexiowitz was proceeding in that quarter, he immediately left this camp and following the course of the Danube, proposed to pass that river on a bridge of boats near Saccia, in the very same place where Darius formerly built the bridge which bore his name. The Turkish army used so much expedition, that it soon came in sight of the Moscovites, the river Pruth being between them.

The czar, sure of the prince of Moldavia, little

thought that the Moldavians would fail him. But the prince and the subjects are often in a different interest. They liked the Turkish government, which is never fatal to any but the grantees and affects a lenity to people who are its tributaries. They feared the Christians, especially the Moscovites, who had upon all occasions used them barbarously. They brought all their provisions to the Ottoman army. The victuallers, who had engaged to furnish the Moscovites with provisions, performed the very promise, to the grand vizier, they had made to the czar. The Walachians, whose country adjoins that of Moldavia, shewed the same regard to the Turks; to such a degree had the remembrance of former cruelties alienated their minds from the Moscovites.

The czar, thus frustrated in his hopes, which, perhaps, he had inconsiderately entertained, found his army, on a sudden, destitute of provisions and forage. The soldiers deserted in troops and that army, ere long, was reduced to less than thirty thousand men and those on the point of perishing, for want. The czar experienced at Pruth,

for having trusted to Cantemir, what Charles XII. found at Pultowa, from having placed too much reliance on Mazeppa. In the mean time, the Turks passed the river, inclosed the Russians and formed an intrenched camp in their front.

It is strange the czar should not have disputed the passage of the river, or at least repaired his fault, by engaging the Turks immediately after the passage, instead of giving them time to destroy his army by fatigue and famine. But that prince seems in this campaign to have taken every step that could tend to his ruin. He found himself without provisions, with the river Pruth behind him, 150,000 Turks in front and 40,000 Tartars continually harassing him right and left. In this extremity, he said publicly, I am, at least, as badly off as my brother Charles was at Pultowa.

Count Poniatowski, the indefatigable agent to the king of Sweden, was in the grand vizier's army, with some Poles and Swedes, who all thought the czar's destruction inevitable.

As soon as Poniatowski saw that the armies must infallibly engage, he sent an express to the king of Sweden, who set out that moment from

Bender, followed by forty officers and enjoying by anticipation the pleasure of fighting the Moscovite emperor. After many losses, and several destructive marches, the czar driven back upon the Pruth, had no cover left but some cheveux de frise, and waggons. A party of the Janizaries and Spahis fell immediately upon his army in that defenceless condition, but they did it in a disorderly manner and the Moscovites defended themselves with a resolution which nothing but despair and the presence of their prince could inspire.

The Turks were twice repulsed. The day following, M. Poniatowski advised the grand vizier to starve out the Moscovite army, which being destitute of every thing, would in a day's time be obliged, together with its emperor, to surrender at discretion.

The czar has since that time more than once acknowledged, that in all his life he never felt so much uneasiness as he did that night. He revolved in his mind all that he had been doing so many years for the glory and welfare of his nation. So many great designs, perpetually interrupted by successive wars, were now in all pro-

bability going to perish with him, before they were brought to perfection. He must either fall a sacrifice to hunger, or attack nearly 180,000 men with feeble troops diminished half their number since they first set out; a cavalry almost dismounted and the foot worn out with famine and fatigue.

About the beginning of the night, he called general Czeremetow to him, and gave him a peremptory order to get every thing ready by break of day, to attack the Turks with the bayonet.

He further gave express orders to burn all the baggage and that no officer should keep above one waggon; that in case of a defeat, the enemy, at any rate, might not get the booty they expected.

Having settled every thing with the general concerning the battle, he retired into his tent full of grief and seized, with convulsions, a disorder he was often troubled with and which came upon him with redoubled violence when he was under any great uneasiness. He forbade all persons to enter his tent in the night, upon any pretence whatsoever, not caring to have remonstrances

made to him against a desperate but necessary resolution and much less that any one should be a witness of the melancholy condition he was in.

In the mean time, the greatest part of his baggage was burnt, according to his order. All the army followed the example, though with regret ; many buried such of their things as were most valuable. The general officers had already given orders for the march and endeavoured to inspire the army with a confidence which themselves wanted ; but the soldiers, exhausted with fatigue and hunger, marched without spirit and without hope. The women, of whom there was too great a number in the army, filled the air with cries and added to the general dismay. Every one expected death or slavery to be their portion the next morning. This is no exaggeration, but is literally the account given by some officers who served in the army.

There was at that time in the Moscovite camp a woman as extraordinary perhaps as the czar himself. She was then known only by the name of Catharine. Her mother was a poor country-woman, named Erb-Magden, of the village of

Ringen in Estonia, a province where the people are bond folks or villains and which was at that time under the dominion of Sweden. She never knew her father and was baptized by the name of Martha. The vicar of the parish, out of pure charity, brought her up till she was fourteen years of age and she then went servant at Maricmbourg, to a Lutheran minister of that part, whose name was Gluk.

At the age of eighteen, she married a Swedish dragoon in 1702. The day after her marriage, a party of the Swedish troops were beaten by the Moscovites and the dragoon, who was in the action, never appeared afterwards, nor could his wife learn whether he was taken prisoner, nor from that time get any account of him.

Some days after she was taken prisoner herself, by general Bauer and became a servant to him, and then to general Czeremetow, who gave her to Menzicow, a man who experienced the extreme vicissitudes of fortune, having been from a pastry-cook's boy made a general and a prince and after that deprived of all and banished to Siberia, where he died in misery and despair.



The czar was at supper with prince Menzicow when he first saw and fell in love with her. In 1707, he married her privately; not that she used any artifice to delude him, but because he found in her a greatness of soul capable of forwarding his designs and even of continuing them after him. He had long since put away his first wife, Ottokesa, daughter of a Boyard, upon a charge of opposing the changes he had made in the empire, a crime of the greatest magnitude in the eyes of the czar. He would have nobody in his family that thought differently from himself. In this foreign slave he fancied that he could discover the qualities of a sovereign, though she wanted every virtue of her sex. For her sake he scorned the prejudices which would have weighed with an ordinary man, and had her crowned empress. The same great capacity, which made her Peter's wife, gave her the empire after the death of her husband. Europe has seen with astonishment this woman, who could neither read nor write, supply the want of strength and education by bravery and fill with glory the throne of a legislator.

Upon her marriage with the czar, she renounced the Lutheran religion, in which she was born, for that of Moscovy and was rebaptized according to the Russian rites; instead of Martha, assuming the name of Catharine, by which she has ever since been known. This woman, then being in the camp at Pruth, held a private council with the general officers, and vice-chancellor Schaffirow, while the czar was in his tent.

They agreed, that it was necessary to sue for peace to the Turks and to persuade the czar into the proposal. The vice-chancellor, in his master's name, wrote a letter to the grand vizier and the czarina, notwithstanding the emperor's prohibition, carried it into the tent to him and having, after many prayers, protestations and tears, obtained his signature, immediately collected all her money and jewels and every thing of value that she had about her, which together with what she could borrow of the general officers, made up a considerable amount, and sent it as a present with the czar's letter, to Osman Aga, lieutenant to the grand vizier. Mahomet Baltagi at first answered haughtily, with the air of a vizier and a con-

queror, Let the czar send me his first minister, and I will see what is to be done. The vice-chancellor Schaffirow came immediately with presents in his hand and offered them publicly to the grand vizier. They were considerable enough to let him see they stood in need of him, but too little for a bribe.

The grand vizier's first demand was, that the czar, with all his army, should surrender at discretion. The vice-chancellor made answer, that his master designed to give him battle within a quarter of an hour and that the Moscovites would be cut in pieces to a man, rather than submit to such infamous conditions. Osman seconded Schaffirow by remonstrances.

Mahomet Baltagi was no soldier. He knew the Janizaries had been repulsed the day before and was easily persuaded by Osman not to put certain advantages to the hazard of a battle. He immediately granted a suspension of arms for six hours and in that time the terms of the treaty were agreed upon.

During the parley, there happened an accident, which shews the word of a Turk is often

more to be depended on than we imagine. Two Italian gentlemen, related to M. Brillo, lieutenant colonel of a regiment of grenadiers in the czar's service, going to look for forage, were taken by the Tartars, who carried them to their camp and offered to sell them to an officer of the Janizaries. The Turk, enraged at such a breach of the truce, seized the Tartars and carried them himself before the grand vizier, together with the two prisoners.

The vizier sent the gentlemen back to the czar's camp and ordered the Tartars, principally concerned in carrying them off, to be beheaded.

In the mean time, the khan of Tartary opposed the conclusion of a treaty which took from him all hopes of pillage. Poniatowski supported him with the most urgent and pressing reasons. But Osman carried his point against the impatience of the Tartar and the insinuations of Poniatowski.

The vizier thought it enough for his master, the grand signior, to conclude an advantageous peace. He insisted, that the Moscovites should give up Asoph, burn the galleys in that port and

demolish the important citadels built upon the *Palus Mæotis*; that the grand signior should have all the cannon and ammunition of these fortresses; that the czar should draw off his troops from Poland and give no further disturbance to the few Cossacks that were under the protection of the Poles, nor to those subject to Turkey and that he should, for the future, pay the Tartars a subsidy of 40,000 sequins per annum, an odious tribute long since imposed, but from which the czar had delivered his country.

At length the treaty was going to be signed, without so much as mentioning the king of Sweden. All that Poniatowski could obtain from the vizier, was to insert an article, by which the Moscovite should pledge himself not to obstruct the return of Charles XII. and, which was remarkable enough, it was stipulated, in this article, that peace should be concluded between the czar and the king of Sweden, if they were so disposed and could agree upon terms.

On these conditions the czar had liberty to retreat with his army, cannon, artillery, colours and baggage. The Turks furnished him with

provisions, and there was plenty of every thing in his camp within two hours after the signing of the treaty, which was begun on the 21st of July 1711, and signed on the 1st of August.

Just as the czar, rescued from the difficulty he was under, was drawing off, with drums beating and colours flying, came the king of Sweden, impatient for the battle and eager to see his enemy in his hands. He had ridden above fifty leagues on horseback, from Bender to Yassis. He arrived at the time when the Russians commenced their unnoledsted retreat. To get to the Turkish camp, he would be obliged to cross the Pruth on a bridge three leagues further. Charles XII. who did nothing like other men, crossed the river by swimming, at the risk of his life and went through the Moscovite camp, at the hazard of being made prisoner, reached the Turkish army and alighted at the tent of count Poniatowski, from whom I had these facts verbally, and in writing. The count came up to him, with a sorrowful countenance and acquainted him by what means he had lost an opportunity, which perhaps he would never recover.

The king went directly, in a fit of rage, to the grand vizier and with indignation in his looks, upbraided him with the treaty he had concluded. I have authority, said the grand vizier, with a calm aspect, to wage war and to make peace. But, added the king, hadst thou not the whole Moscovite army in thy power? Our law, gravely replied the vizier, commands us to grant our enemies peace, when they implore our mercy. Ah! angrily retorted the king in violent emotion, does it order you to make a bad treaty when you are in a capacity to impose what laws you please? Did it not depend on thee to carry the czar prisoner to Constantinople?

The Turk so pressed, answered drily, and who was to govern his empire in his absence? It is not fit that all kings should be out of their kingdoms. Charles replied by a smile of indignation and then threw himself down upon a sopha and looking upon the vizier, with an air of resentment and contempt, he stretched out his leg towards him, and purposely entangling his spur in the Turk's robe, tore it; then rose up immediately, mounted his horse and returned to Bender, with a heart full of despair.

Poniatowski continued some time longer with the grand vizier, to try if he could not prevail upon him by softer methods to make some better terms with the czar; but it being then prayer time, the Turk, without answering a word, went to his ablution, and prayers.



## BOOK VI.

*Intrigues at the Ottoman Porte. The Khan of Tartary and the Pacha of Bender endeavour to force Charles to be gone. He defends himself with forty domestics against the whole army. He is taken and treated as a prisoner.*

FORTUNE, which had before so favoured the king of Sweden, bore hard upon him now, even in the most trifling things. On his return he found his little camp at Bender and all the buildings, inundated by the water of the Niester. He retired to some miles distance, near a village called Varnitza ; and as if he had a secret presage of what he was afterwards to experience, he there built a large stone house, capable, in case of emergency, of sustaining an assault for some hours. He furnished it also magnificently, contrary to his custom, to command more respect from the Turks.

He likewise built two others, one for his chancery and the other for his favourite Grothusen,

who kept one of his tables. While the king was thus building at Bender, as if he meant always to remain in Turkey, Baltagi Mahomet, more apprehensive than ever of the intrigues and complaints of this prince at the Porte, had sent the emperor of Germany's resident to Vienna, to procure a passage for the king of Sweden through the hereditary territories of the house of Austria. This envoy came back in three weeks, with a promise from the imperial regency, to pay Charles XII. all due honours and conduct him safely into Pomerania.

The reason why the regency were applied to, was, because Charles, Joseph's successor was then in Spain disputing the crown with Philip V. While the German envoy was executing this commission at Vienna, the grand vizier sent three Pachas to the king of Sweden, to acquaint him that he must leave the territories of the Turkish empire.

The king, who knew what they came about, first sent them word, that if they ventured to make any proposal contrary to his honour, or to fail in their respect towards him, he would hang

them all three up within an hour. The Pacha of Salonica, who delivered the message, disguised the harshness of his commission under the most respectful terms. Charles dismissed the audience without vouchsafing any answer. His chancellor Mullern, who staid with the three Pachas, in a few words signified to them his master's refusal, which they had already perceived by his silence.

The grand vizier was not discouraged, he ordered Ismael Pacha, the new seraskier of Bender, to threaten the king with the sultan's resentment, if he did not comply without delay. The seraskier was a person of a mild disposition, which had gained him Charles's good-will and the friendship of all the Swedes. The king entered into a conference with him, but it was only to let him know, that he would not depart till Achmet had granted him two things, the punishment of his grand vizier, and 100,000 men to return with into Poland.

Baltagi Mahomet was very sensible, that the sole motive of Charles's stay in Turkey was to ruin him. He took care to place guards upon all the roads from Bender to Constantinople, to inter-

cept the king's letters. He did more ; he retrenched his thaim, that is the provision which the Porte allows the princes to whom she grants an asylum. That of the king of Sweden was prodigious, consisting of five hundred crowns a day in money and a profusion of every thing that could contribute to maintain a court in splendour and plenty.

As soon as the king found that the vizier had dared to retrench his allowance, he turned to the steward of his household and said, You have hitherto had but two tables, I command you to prepare four for to-morrow.

Charles the XIIth's officers had been used to find nothing impossible which their master ordered ; but having neither provisions nor money, they were forced to borrow at twenty, thirty and forty per cent. of the officers, domestics, and janizaries, who had grown rich by the king's prodigality. M. Fabricius, the envoy of Holstein, Jeffreys the English minister, their secretaries and friends, gave all that they had. The king with his customary hauteur and without any uneasiness for the morrow, subsisted on these gifts

which could not last long. It was necessary to deceive the vigilance of the guards and send, secretly, to Constantinople to borrow money from the European merchants ; but they all refused lending to a king who had apparently put it out of his power ever to return it.

One Cooke, an Englishman, was at length bold enough to risk the loan of about 140,000 crowns, content to lose them if the king of Sweden were to die. This money was brought to the king's little camp just as they were beginning to be in want of every thing else and without hope of resource.

In this interval, M. Poniatowski wrote and that from the camp of the grand vizier, an account of the campaign of Pruth, wherein he accuses Baltagi Mahomet of cowardice and treachery. This account he entrusted to an old janizary enraged at the vizier's weakness and moreover gained by Poniatowski's presents and having obtained permission to leave the camp, he, with his own hands, presented the letter to the sultan.

Poniatowski set out from the camp some days

after, and went to the Ottoman Porte to cabal against the grand vizier as usual.

Circumstances seemed favourable. The czar now at liberty, was in no haste to perform his promises. The keys of Asoph were not forthcoming and the grand vizier who was responsible for them, being apprehensive, with reason, for his master's resentment, durst not appear in his presence.

The seraglio was then more than ever filled with intrigues and factions. These cabals, which no court is free from and which generally terminate in our own, by some minister being dismissed, or at the utmost sent into exile, in Constantinople always take off more than one head. It cost the life of the old vizier Chourlouli and Osman, that officer of Baltagi Mahomet, who was the principal author of the peace of Pruth and who since that period, had obtained a considerable office at the Porte.

Among Osman's treasures were found the czarina's ring and 20,000 pieces of gold in Saxon and Moscovite coin ; this was a proof that money

alone had withdrawn the czar from the precipice and ruined the fortune of Charles XII.

The vizier Baltagi Mahomet, was banished to the isle of Lemnos, where he died three years after. The grand signior neither seized upon his property at his exile, nor at his death. He was not rich and his poverty cleared all stain from his memory.

To this grand vizier succeeded Jussuf, or Joseph, whose fortune was no less singular than that of his predecessor. Born on the frontiers of Moscovy and taken prisoner by the Turks at six years of age, together with his family, he had been sold to a janizary. He was long a servant in the seraglio and in time became the second person in the empire where he had been a slave ; but he was only the shadow of a minister. The young selictar, Ali Coumourgi, raised him to this slippery post, in hopes of filling it himself and Jussuf his creature had nothing else to do, but to affix the seals of the empire to what the favourite desired. The politics of the Ottoman court seemed to have been entirely changed since the beginning of this vizieriate. The czar's pleni-

potentiaries, who resided at Constantinople, both as ministers and as hostages, were better treated than ever. The grand vizier confirmed the peace of Pruth with them ; but what most mortified the king of Sweden was, being informed that the secret alliance, made at Constantinople with the czar, was effected by the mediation of the English and Dutch ambassadors.

Constantinople, after Charles's retreat to Bender, was become what Rome has so often been, the centre of the negotiations of Christendom. Count Desalleurs, the French ambassador there, supported the interests of Charles and Stanislaus ; the emperor of Germany's minister opposed them. The Swedish and Moscovite factions clashed, as those of France and Spain had long done at the court of Rome.

England and Holland which appeared neutral, were not so. The new trade, which the czar had opened at Petersburgh, attracted the attention of those two trading nations.

The English and Dutch will always be for the prince who will most favour their traffic. There was much to be gained from the czar ; so that it



is no wonder the English and Dutch ministers should secretly serve him at the Ottoman Porte. One of the conditions of this new alliance was, that Charles should be sent immediately out of the Turkish dominions ; the czar either being in hopes of seizing his person upon the road, or thinking Charles less formidable at home than in Turkey, where he was always ready to raise the Ottoman arms against the Russian empire.

The king of Sweden was perpetually soliciting the Porte to send him back through Poland with a numerous army. The divan indeed were determined to send him back, but it was only with an escort of seven or eight thousand men ; not as a king that they were disposed to succour, but as a guest they were desirous to be rid of. With this view sultan Achmet wrote to him in the following terms :

Most powerful among the kings that worship Jesus, redresser of wrongs and injuries and protector of justice in the ports and republics of the south and north ; shining in majesty, the friend of honour and glory and of our

sublime Porte, Charles king of Sweden, whose enterprises may God crown with success.

As soon as the most illustrious Achmet, formerly Chiaoux Pachi, shall have had the honour to present to you this letter, adorned with our imperial seal, be persuaded and convinced of the truth of our intentions, which are contained therein, viz. That though we had designed anew to send our ever victorious troops against the czar ; yet that prince, to avoid the just resentment we had shewn at his delay in executing the treaty concluded on the banks of the Pruth and since renewed at our sublime Porte, having surrendered to our empire the castle and city of Azoph and endeavoured by the mediation of the English and Dutch ambassadors, our ancient allies, to cultivate a lasting peace with us, we have granted his request and delivered to his plenipotentiaries who remain with us as hostages, our imperial ratification, after having received his from their hands.

We have given our inviolable and salutary orders to the most honourable and valiant Delvet

Gherai, han of Budziack, of the Crimea, Nagay and Circassia and to Ismael, our right sage counsellor and generous seraskier of Bender, (whose magnificence and prudence may God perpetuate) for your return through Poland, according to your first design, which has again been laid before us in your name. You must therefore prepare to set forward the next winter, under the auspices of providence and with an honourable escort, to return into your own provinces, taking care to pass through those of Poland in a friendly manner.

You shall be provided with every thing necessary for your journey, by my sublime Porte, as well in money as in men, horses and waggons. We exhort you above all things and recommend you to give the most positive and clear orders to all the Swedes and other persons in your retinue, not to commit any disorder and to do no act that may either directly or indirectly tend to violate this peace and friendship.

You will thereby preserve our good will, of which we shall endeavour to give you as great and

frequent proofs as we shall have opportunities. Our troops intended to accompany you, shall receive orders conformable to our imperial intentions.

Given at our sublime Porte at Constantinople the 14th of the moon Rebyul-Eurech, 1214, which answers to the 19th of April, 1713.

This letter still did not make the king of Sweden give up his hopes. He wrote to the sultan, that he should, as long as he lived, be grateful for the favours his highness had heaped upon them ; but that he thought the sultan too just to send him away with the mere escort of a flying camp, into a country yet inundated by the czar's troops. Indeed the Russian emperor, notwithstanding he was obliged, by the first article of the treaty of Pruth, to draw all his forces out of Poland, had sent fresh ones thither and it seems strange the grand signior should know nothing of it.

The bad policy of the Porte, in always having from vanity, ambassadors of Christian princes at Constantinople and never keeping, so much as, a

single agent in the Christian courts, gives the latter an opportunity of penetrating into and sometimes of directing the most secret resolutions of the sultan, continually keeping the divan in profound ignorance of what is publicly passing in the Christian world.

The sultan shut up in the seraglio among his women and his eunuchs, sees only with the eyes of his grand vizier. That minister, as inaccessible as his master, taken up with the intrigues of the seraglio and having no correspondence abroad, is, for the most part, imposed upon himself, or deceives the sultan, who deposes or orders him to be strangled for the first offence, in order to choose another equally ignorant or treacherous, who behaves like his predecessors and falls in as short a time.

Such, for the most part, is the inactivity and perfect security of this court, that if the Christian princes were to join in a league against it, their fleets would be at the Dardanelles and their army at the gates of Adrianople, before the Turks would have thought of defending themselves. But the different interests that will always divide

Christendom will preserve the Turks from a fate, for which they seem at present to be ripe, by their want of policy and their ignorance in war and maritime affairs seems now to be preparing for them.

Achmet was so little acquainted with what passed in Poland, that he sent an aga to see whether it was true that the czar's forces were still there. Two secretaries of the king of Sweden, who understood the Turkish language, accompanied the aga, in order to confront him in case of a false report.

This aga saw with his own eyes and gave the sultan a true account. Achmet in his rage was going to strangle the grand vizier; but the favourite who protected and thought he might have occasion for him, obtained his pardon, and kept him for some time longer in the ministry.

The Russians were openly protected by the vizier and secretly by Ali Coumourgî, who had changed sides; but the sultan was so provoked; the infraction of the treaty was so manifest and the janizaries, who often make the ministers, favourites and sultans themselves tremble, called

so loudly for war, that nobody in the scraglio durst offer a more moderate opinion.

The grand signior immediately committed the Moscovite ambassadors, already as much used to go to prison as to an audience, to the seven towers. War was declared afresh against the czar, the horse-tails were displayed and orders given to all the Pachas to assemble an army of two hundred thousand fighting men. The sultan himself quitted Constantinople and fixed his court at Adrianople, in order to be nearer the seat of the war.

During this time a solemn embassy, from Augustus and the republic of Poland, to the grand signior, was upon the road to Adrianople. At the head of this embassy was the palatinate of Massovia with a retinue of above 300 persons.

All who composed the embassy were seized and imprisoned in one of the suburbs of the city. Never was the king of Sweden's party more elevated than upon this occasion ; these great preparations however, again were unavailing and all their expectations were disappointed.

If a public minister of great wisdom and fore-

sight, then residing at Constantinople, is to be credited, young Cournourgi had other things in his head besides hazarding a war with the czar of Mescovy to gain a desert country. He had thoughts of taking Peloponnesus, now called the Morea, from the Venetians and making himself master of Hungary.

To put his great designs in execution, he wanted nothing but the office of prime vizier, for which he was yet thought too young. In this view it was of more importance to him to be the czar's ally than his enemy. It was neither his interest nor his inclination to keep the king of Sweden any longer, much less to arm Turkey in his behalf. He was not only for sending that prince away, but also declared openly, that no Christian minister ought hereafter to be permitted at Constantinople ; that the common ambassadors were only honourable spies, who corrupted or betrayed the viziers and had too long influenced the intrigues of the seraglio ; that the Franks settled at Pera and in the towns of the Levant, were merchants, who had occasion for a consul only and not an ambassador. The grand vizier, who



owed both his dignity and his life to the favourite and was besides afraid of him, complied with his intentions and the more readily, as he had sold himself to the Moscovites and hoped to be revenged on the king of Sweden, who would have ruined him. The mufti, Ali Cournourgi's creature, was also a slave to his humour. He had given his counsel for a war against the czar, when it was the favourite's wish and as soon as this young man changed his opinion, he declared it unjust. Thus the army was no sooner got together, than they hearkened to proposals for an accommodation. The vice-chancellor Schaffirow and young Czeremetow, the czar's plenipotentiaries and hostages at the Porte, promised, after several negotiations, that the czar should draw his troops out of Poland. The grand vizier, who well knew that the czar would not execute this treaty, was resolved however to sign it and the sultan, content with giving laws to the Russians, though only in appearance, continued still at Adrianople. Thus, in the space of less than six months, peace was ratified with the czar, then

war declared and afterwards peace renewed again.

The main article in all these treaties related to the removal of the king of Sweden. The sultan would not commit his own honour and that of the Ottoman empire so far, as to expose the king to be taken, upon the road, by his enemies. It was stipulated that he should set off, but that the ambassadors of Poland and Moscovy should be responsible for the security of his person and those ambassadors swore, in the name of their masters, that neither the czar, nor king Augustus, should molest his passage and Charles on the other hand was not to endeavour to raise any commotions in Poland. The divan having thus determined Charles's fate, Ismael, seraskier of Bender, repaired to Varnitza, where the king was encamped and acquainted him with the resolutions of the Porte, giving him to understand, in a civil manner, that there was no time to delay and that he must be gone.

Charles made no other answer than this, that the grand signior had promised him an army and

not a guard and that kings must keep their word.

In the mean time general Flemming, king Augustus's minister and favourite, maintained a private correspondence with the khan of Tartary and the seraskier of Bender. La Marre, a French gentleman in the Saxon service, had made more than one journey from Bender to Dresden and all his journies were suspected.

Precisely at this time, the king of Sweden caused a courier, sent from Flemming to the Tartarian prince, to be seized upon the frontiers of Walachia. The letters were carried to him and decyphered. There appeared plain marks of a correspondence between the Tartars and the court of Dresden; but conceived in terms so ambiguous and general, that it was difficult to say, whether king Augustus's design was merely to draw off the Turks from the Swedish party, or to persuade the khan to deliver up Charles, to his Saxons, as he attended him to Poland.

It is hard to conceive, that so generous a prince as Augustus, for the sake of seizing the king of Sweden's person would venture the lives of his

ambassadors and 300 Polish gentlemen detained at Adrianople, as hostages for the security of Charles.

But on the other hand, Flemming, an absolute minister of Augustus, was a man of very loose principles and far from scrupulous. The outrages done to the electoral king, by this king of Sweden, seemed to justify any kind of revenge and it might be thought that if the court of Dresden could buy Charles from the khan of Tartary, it would be no hard matter to purchase the liberty of the Polish hostages at the Ottoman Porte.

These reasons were agitated between the king, Mullern, his private chancellor and Grothusen his favourite. They read the letters again and again and the unhappy situation they were in, increasing their suspicions, they resolved to believe the worst.

Some days after the king was confirmed in his suspicions by the precipitate departure of one count Sapicha, who had fled to him for refuge and now left him abruptly to go to Poland and throw himself into the arms of Augustus. Upon

any other occasion he would have looked upon Sapieha only as a malcontent, but, at this nice juncture, he made no scruple to believe him a traitor. The repeated importunities that had been made to him to be gone, raised his suspicions to certainty. The positiveness of his temper, joined to all these probabilities, made him continue firm in the opinion that there was a design to betray him and deliver him up to his enemies, notwithstanding the plot has never been proved.

He might be mistaken in his idea that king Augustus had made a bargain with the Tartars for his person; but he was deceived still more in depending upon the assistance of the Ottoman court. Be that as it might, he resolved to gain time.

He told the pacha of Bender that he could not go till he was in a condition to pay his debts; for though his thaim had for a long time been restored, his generosity had always forced him to borrow. The pacha asked him how much he wanted, the king answered, at a venture, a thousand purses which amounts to 1,500,000 livres

of French money full weight. The pacha wrote to the porte about it and the sultan, instead of 1000 purses, granted him 1200 and wrote the following letter to the pacha.

Letter from the Grand Signior to the Pacha of  
Bender.

The design of this imperial letter is to let you know, that upon your representation and request and upon that of the right noble Delvet Gherai Han, to our sublime porte, our imperial munificence has granted the king of Sweden a thousand purses, which shall be sent to Bender under the care and custody of the most illustrious Mahomet pacha, formerly chiaoux pachi, to remain in your custody till the time of the departure of the king of Sweden, whose steps God direct and then to be given him with two hundred purses more, as an excess of our imperial liberality, beyond what he desires.

As to the route of Poland, which he is resolved to take, you and the han, who are to attend him, must be careful to take such prudent and wise measures, as may, during the whole passage, pre-

vent the troops under your command and those of the king of Sweden, from doing any damage, or other act that may be thought a violation of the peace subsisting between our sublime porte and the kingdom and republic of Poland; so that the king of Sweden may go as a friend under our protection.

By doing this, which you are to recommend to him most expressly to attend to he will receive all the honour and respect due to his majesty, from the Poles, as we have been assured by the ambassador of king Augustus and the republic, who also, on this condition, have offered themselves and several others of the Polish nobility, if we shall require it, as hostages and security for his passage.

At the time that you and the right noble Delvet Gherai shall agree upon for the march, you shall put yourself at the head of your brave soldiers, among whom will be the Tartars, with the han at their head and shall conduct the king of Sweden and his men.

May it please the only Almighty God to direct your and their steps. The pacha of Aulos will

continue at Bender, with a regiment of Spahis and another of Janizaries, to defend it in your absence. By following our imperial orders and intentions in all these points and articles, you will render yourself deserving of the continuance of our imperial favour and of the praise and recompence due to all such as observe them.

Given at our imperial residence at Constantinople the 2d day of the moon Horse 1214, of the Hegira.

While this answer was expected from the grand signior, the king wrote to the porte, to complain of the supposed treachery of the khan of Tartary. But the passages were well guarded and the ministry was against him, so that his letters never got to the sultan. The vizier would not even suffer M. Dessalleurs to come to Adrianople, where the porte then was, lest that minister, who was the king of Sweden's agent, should endeavour to disconcert their design of sending him away.

Charles, enraged to see himself, in a manner, driven out of the grand signior's territories, resolved not to stir a step.



He might have desired to return through the German territories, to embark on the Black sea, to go to Marseilles through the Mediterranean ; but he chose rather to ask nothing and wait the event.

When the 1200 purses were arrived, his treasurer Grothusen, who, by residing so long in Turkey, had learnt to speak the language, went to wait upon the pacha without an interpreter, with the view of getting the 1200 purses from him and afterwards forming some new intrigue at the porte; still under the false supposition, that the Swedish party would at length arm the Ottoman empire against the czar.

Grothusen told the pacha, that the king's equipage could not be got ready without money. But we, said the pacha, shall defray all the expences of your departure. Your master will be at no charge while he continues under the protection of mine.

Grothusen replied, that the difference between the Turkish equipages and those of the Franks was so great, that they were under a necessity of

applying to the Swedish and Polish artificers who were at Varnitza.

He assured him that his master was willing to go and that this money would facilitate and hasten his departure. The too credulous pacha gave him the 1200 purses and within a few days came and desired the king, in a very respectful manner, to give orders for setting off.

What was his surprize, when the king told him he was not ready to go and that he should want a thousand purses more. The pacha, confounded with this answer, was some time without the power of speech and then went to a window, where he was seen to shed some tears. Afterwards, turning to the king, I shall lose my head, said he, for having obliged thy majesty. I have given the 1200 purses against the express order of my sovereign. Having said these words, he was going away full of grief.

The king stopped him and told him he would make an excuse for him to the sultan. Ah! replied the Turk, as he was going out, my master has no idea of excusing faults, he can only punish them.

Ismael Pacha went to make known this news to the khan of Tartary, who having received the same order as the pacha, not to suffer the 1200 purses to be delivered before the king's departure and having consented to the delivery of them, was as apprehensive of the grand signior's resentment as was the pacha. They both wrote to the Porte to clear themselves, protested that they had not parted with the 1200 purses, but upon a solemn promise made to them, by the king's minister, to be gone immediately and intreated his highness not to impute the king's refusal to their disobedience.

Charles, still persisting in the notion that the khan and the pacha designed to deliver him to his enemies, ordered M. Funk, his then envoy to the grand signior, to lay complaints against them, and to ask for 1000 purses more. His extreme generosity and the little account he made of money, prevented his seeing that there was something degrading in this proposal. He only did it with a view to be refused and that he might have a fresh pretence for not departing. But a man must be reduced to strange extremities, be-

fore he can stand in need of such artifices. Savari, his interpreter, a crafty enterprizing man, carried his letter to Adrianople, in spite of the grand vizier's care to keep the passages strictly guarded.

Funk was forced to deliver this dangerous message. All the answer he received was, to be thrown into prison. The sultan, in a rage, called an extraordinary divan and, which is very rarely done, spoke himself upon the occasion. Such was his speech, according to the translation then made of it.

I scarcely ever knew the king of Sweden but by his defeat at Pultowa and the request he made to me to grant him an asylum in my empire. I have not, I believe, any need of him, nor any reason to love or to fear him; yet, without consulting other motives than the hospitality of a Mussulman and my own generosity, which sheds the dew of its favours upon the great as well as upon the little, upon strangers as well as upon my own subjects, I have received and assisted him with every thing; his ministers, officers and soldiers and for three years and a half have never held my hand from loading him with presents.

I have granted him a very considerable escort to conduct him into his own country. He asked 1000 purses to defray some expences, though I pay them all. Instead of 1000 I have granted him 1200. After getting these out of the hands of the seraskier of Bender, he desires 1000 more and refuses to go, under the pretext that the guard is too little, whereas it is too large to pass through the country of a friend.

I ask then, whether it be a breach of the laws of hospitality to send this prince away and whether foreign princes ought to accuse me of violence and injustice, in case I should be obliged to make him go by force? All the divan answered, that the grand signior might lawfully do what he had said.

The mufti declared that the Mussulmans are not bound to hospitality towards infidels, much less towards the ungrateful and he granted his fetfa, a kind of mandate, which for the most part accompanies the important orders of the grand signior. These fetfas are revered as oracles, though the persons from whom they come are as much the sultan's slaves as any others.

The order and the fetfa were carried to Bender by the Bouyouk Imraour, grand master of the horse, and a chiaou pacha, first usher. The pacha of Bender received the order at the khan's of Tartary; he went immediately to Varnitza, to know whether the king would go away in a friendly manner, or force him to execute the sultan's orders.

Charles XII. not used to this threatening language, could not command his temper. Obey thy master, said he to him, if thou darest, and be gone from my presence. The pacha, in a rage, went off full gallop, contrary to the manner of the Turks, and meeting Fabricius by the way, he called out to him without stopping, the king will not hear reason, you will soon see strange things. The same day he discontinued the supply of the king's provisions, and removed the guard of Janizaries. He sent also to the Poles and Cossacks at Varnitza, to let them know, that if they had a mind to have any provisions, they must leave the king of Sweden's camp and put themselves under the protection of the porte at Bender. They all obeyed and left the

king, with only the officers of his household and 300 Swedish soldiers, to cope with 20,000 Tartars and 6000 Turks.

There was no more provision in the camp either for man or horse. The king gave orders to shoot, outside of the camp, twenty of the fine Arabian horses the grand signior had sent him, saying, I will neither have their provisions nor their horses. This made a noble feast for the Tartars, who, as is well known, think horse-flesh delicious. The Turks and Tartars now invested the king's little camp on all sides.

This prince, with all the calmness in the world, ordered his three hundred Swedes to make regular intrenchments and worked at them himself. His chancellor, treasurer, secretaries, valets de chambre and all his domestics, put their hands to the work. Some barricadoed the windows, others fastened beams behind the doors in the form of buttresses.

When the house was well barricadoed and the king had taken a view of his supposed fortifications, he sate calmly down to chess with his favourite Grothusen, as if every thing had been in

perfect security. Luckily, Fabricius, the envoy of Holstein, did not lodge at Varnitza, but in a small village between Varnitza and Bender, where Mr. Jeffreys, the English envoy to the king of Sweden, resided also. The two ministers, seeing the storm ready to break out, took upon them to be mediators between the 'Turks and the king. The khan, and especially the pacha of Bender, who had no inclination to offer violence to the monarch, were glad to receive the offers of the two ministers. They had two conferences together at Bender, at which the usher of the seraglio and the grand master of the horse, who brought the sultan's order and the mufti's fetfa, assisted.

M. Fabricius avowed to them, that his Swedish majesty had great reason to believe they designed to deliver him to his enemies in Poland. The khan and pacha and others, swore by their heads, calling God to witness, that they detested such a horrible piece of treachery and would lose the last drop of their blood rather than suffer even the least failure of respect to the king in Poland. They added, that they had in their



hands the Russian and Polish ambassadors, whose lives should answer for the least affront dared to be offered the king of Sweden. In a word, they complained bitterly that the king should entertain such injurious suspicions of persons, who had so generously received and so handsomely treated him and though oaths are often the language of treachery, Fabricius suffered himself to be persuaded, he thought he perceived such an air of truth in their protestations, as falsehood never imitates but imperfectly. He well knew there had been a secret correspondence between the khan of Tartary and king Augustus; but he remained convinced that the design of that negotiation was only to force Charles XII. to retire out of the territories of the grand signior. Whether Fabricius was mistaken or not, he assured them he would represent, to the king, the injustice of these jealousies; but do you intend to force him to be gone? added he. Yes, said the pacha, such is our master's order. Then he desired them to consider well, whether that order was to spill the blood of a crowned head? Yes, replied the

khan angrily, if that crowned head disobey the grand signior in his empire.

Every thing being ready for the assault, Charles's death now seemed inevitable; but the sultan's command not being positively to kill him in case of resistance, the pacha prevailed upon the khan to let him send an express that moment to Adrianople, where the grand signior then was, to receive his highness's final orders.

M. Jefferys and M. Fabricius, having procured this little respite, ran to acquaint the king with it. They came with the expedition of people who brought good news, but were very coldly received. He called them voluntary mediators and persisted in asserting the sultan's order and the mufti's fetfa were forged, because they had sent for fresh orders to the Porte.

The English minister withdrew, fully resolved to concern himself no more with the affairs of so inflexible a prince. M. Fabricius, beloved by the king, and more used to his humour than the English minister, staid with him, to conjure him not to hazard a life so precious upon so unnecessary an occasion.

The king, instead of an answer, shewed him his fortifications and desired him to employ his mediation only to procure him provisions. Leave was easily obtained from the Turks to let provisions pass to the king's camp, till the courier should arrive from Adrianople.

The khan had forbidden his Tartars, though impatient of pillage, to make any attempt upon the Swedes till a new order came, so that Charles XII. sometimes went out of his camp, with forty horse, and rode through the midst of the Tartar troops, who very respectfully left him a free passage. He even marched directly up their lines, and instead of resisting, they opened to him.

At length the grand signior's order being come, to put to the sword all the Swedes that should make the least resistance and not to spare the life of the king, the pacha had the civility to shew Fabricius the order, that he might make a last effort upon Charles's mind. Fabricius went immediately to acquaint him with this bad news.

Have you seen the order you speak of? said the king. I have, answered Fabricius. Very well; tell them from me, that this order is a second for-

gery of theirs and that I will not go. Fabricius fell at his feet, put himself in a passion and reproached him with his obstinacy; all to no purpose. Go back to your Turks, said the king to him, smiling; if they attack me, I know how to defend myself.

The king's chaplains also fell upon their knees before him, conjuring him not to expose the wretched remains of Pultowa and, above all, his own sacred person to certain death; assuring him besides, that resistance in this was unjust and that it was a violation of the laws of hospitality to continue, against their will, with strangers, who had so long and so generously supported him. The king, who had shewn no resentment against Fabricius, grew warm towards the priests and told them that he had taken them to pray for him and not to give him advice.

General Hord and general Dardoff, whose opinion it had always been not to venture a battle, which in the consequence must prove fatal, shewed the king their breasts, covered with wounds received in his service and assuring him that they were ready to die for him, begged that

it might at least be upon a more necessary occasion. I know, said Charles XII. by your wounds and my own, that we have fought valiantly together : you have hitherto done your duty ; do it again now. There was nothing then left but to obey. Every one was ashamed not to court death with the king. This prince, being prepared for the assault, secretly flattered himself with the pleasure and honour of sustaining the shock of a whole army with 300 Swedes. He appointed every man to his post. His chancellor, Mullern, the secretary, Empreus and the clerks, were to defend the chancery-house. Baron Fief, at the head of the officers of the kitchen, was at another post. The grooms of the stables and the cooks had another place to guard ; for with him every man was a soldier. He rode from his fortifications to his house, promising rewards to every body, making officers and declaring, that he would make the lowest of his servants captains if they fought with courage.

It was not long before they saw the Turks and Tartars advancing to attack the little fortress, with ten pieces of cannon and two mortars. The

horse-tails waved in the air, the clarions sounded, the cries of *Alla, Alla*, were heard on all sides. Baron Grothusen took notice that the Turks did not mix any abusive language against the king in their cries, but only called him *demirbash*, head of iron, and resolved that moment to go alone and unarmed out of the fortifications. He advanced into the ranks of the Janizaries, who had almost all received money from him. Ah, what my friends, said he to them in their own language, are you come to massacre 300 defenceless Swedes? You brave Janizaries, who have pardoned 100,000 Moscovites upon their crying *amman* (pardon) to you: have you forgotten the kindness you have received from us? And will you assassinate that great king of Sweden, whom you love so much and who has been so generous to you? My friends, he asks but three days and the sultan's orders are not so strict as you are made to believe.

These words produced an effect which Grothusen himself did not expect. The Janizaries swore, by their beards, they would not attack the king and that they would give him the three days

he demanded. In vain was the signal given for the assault. The Janizaries, far from obeying, threatened to fall upon their chiefs, if three days were not granted to the king of Sweden. They came tumultuously to the pacha of Bender's tent, crying out that the sultan's orders were fictitious. To this unexpected insurrection the pacha had nothing to oppose but patience.

He feigned pleasure at the generous resolution of the janizaries and ordered them to retire to Bender. The khan of Tartary, a violent man, would have given the assault immediately with his troops ; but the Pacha, who did not design the Tartars alone to have the honour of taking the king, when he perhaps might be punished for the disobedience of his janizaries, persuaded the khan to wait till the next day.

The Pacha returned to Bender, assembled all the officers of the janizaries and the oldest soldiers and read and shewed them the positive order of the sultan and the Mufti's fefta.

Sixty of the oldest of them, with venerable white beards, who had received a thousand presents from the king's hand, offered to go in per-

son and intreat him to put himself into their hands, and permit them to serve him as guards.

The Pacha consented to it; for there was no expedient he would not try, rather than be forced to kill the prince. Accordingly these sixty old men went the next morning to Varnitza, having nothing in their hands but long white staffs, the only arms of the janizaries, when they are not going to fight: for the Turks look upon, as barbarous, the custom of the Christians to wear swords in time of peace, and to enter armed into their churches and the houses of their friends.

They addressed themselves to baron Grothusen and chancellor Mullern. They told them, they were come with a design to serve as faithful guards to the king and that, if he pleased, they would conduct him to Adrianople, where he might speak to the grand signior<sup>1</sup> in person. While they were making this proposal, the king read the letters that were brought from Constantinople and which Fabricius, who could not see him any more, had conveyed privately to him by a janizary. They were from count Poniatowski,



who could neither serve him at Bender nor Adrianople, having been detained at Constantinople, by order of the Porte, from the time of the imprudent demand of the thousand purses. He told the king, that the sultan's orders to seize or massacre his royal person, in case of resistance, were but too true; that the sultan indeed was imposed upon by his ministers; but the more he was imposed upon in this affair, the more he would be obeyed; that he must submit to the times, and yield to necessity: that he took the liberty to advise him to try every thing with the ministers by way of negotiation; not to be inflexible where the softest methods were required and to expect from policy and time the remedy of an evil which violence would encrease beyond redemption.

But neither the proposals of the old janizaries, nor Poniatowski's letters, could in the least convince the king that he could give way without dishonour. He chose rather to die by the hand of the Turks, than be in any manner their prisoner. He dismissed the janizaries without so much

as seeing them, and sent them word, that if they did not go about their business, he would shave their beards for them ; which, in the east, is the most outrageous of all affronts.

The old soldiers, fired with the keenest resentment returned home crying : Ah this head of iron ! Since he is resolved to perish, let him perish. They gave the Pacha an account of their mission, and acquainted their comrades at Bender, with the strange reception they had met with. Upon this all swore to obey the Pacha's orders without delay and they were now as impatient to go to the assault as they had been averse to it the day before.

The word was given that moment. The Turks marched to the intrenchments. The Tartars were already waiting for them and the cannon began to play.

The janizaries on one side and the Tartars on the other, forced the little camp in an instant. Hardly twenty Swedes had drawn their swords, before the three hundred were surrounded and taken prisoners without resistance. The king

was then on horseback between his house and his camp, with the generals Ilord, Dardoff and Sparre. Seeing that all his soldiers had suffered themselves to be taken before his eyes, he coolly said to these three officers, Let us go and defend the house. We'll fight, added he with a smile, *pro aris & focis*.

He immediately galloped up with them to the house which they had fortified in the best manner they could and where he had placed about forty domestics as centinels.

These generals, however accustomed to the obstinate intrepidity of their master, could not help being surprized, that he should deliberately and jocosely resolve to stand out against ten pieces of cannon and a whole army. They followed him with some guards and domestics, amounting together to twenty persons.

But when they reached the door, they found it beset with janizaries ; nearly two hundred Turks or Tartars had already got in at a window and made themselves masters of all the apartments, except a great hall, whither the king's domestics

had retreated. It happened luckily, that this hall was near the door, at which the king purposed to enter with his little troop of twenty persons. He threw himself off his horse with pistol and sword in hand and his followers did the same.

The janizaries fell upon him on all sides, encouraged by the Pacha's promise of eight ducats of gold to each man that should but touch his clothes, in case they could take him. He wounded and killed all who came near him. A janizary whom he had wounded, clapped his blunderbuss to his face and if the arm of a Turk had not jostled him, occasioned by the crowd, which moved backwards and forwards, like waves, the king had been killed. The ball grazed his nose and took off the bottom of his ear and then broke the arms of general Hord, whose fate it was always to be wounded at his master's side.

The king stuck his sword into the janizary's breast and at the same time his domestics, who were shut up in the great hall, opened the door to him. The king entered like an arrow, followed by his little troop and in an instant they shut

the door, and barricadoed it with whatever they could find.

Thus was Charles XII. shut up in this hall with the whole of his attendants, amounting to about threescore men, officers, guards, secretaries, valets de chambre and domestics of every kind.

The janizaries and Tartars pillaged the rest of the house and filled the apartments. Let us go, said he, and drive these barbarians out of my house! and putting himself at the head of his men, he, with his own hands, opened the door of the hall which faced his bed-chamber, went in and fired upon the plunderers.

The Turks laden with booty, terrified at the sudden appearance of the king whom they had been used to reverence, threw down their arms and leapt out of the window, or fled into the cellars. The king taking advantage of their confusion and his own men animated with this piece of success, pursued the Turks from chamber to chamber, killed or wounded those who had not made their escape and in a quarter of an hour cleared the house of the enemy.

The king, in the heat of the fight, perceived

two janizaries who had hidden themselves under his bed. One he killed with a stroke of his sword: but the other asked pardon, crying, *Amman*. I grant thee thy life, said the king to the Turk, upon condition that thou goest and givest the Pacha a faithful account of what thou hast seen. Grothusen explained the words in Turkish to him. The Turk easily promised to do as he was desired and he was allowed to leap out at the window, like the others.

The Swedes, at length become masters of the house, shut down and again barricadoed the windows. They had no want of arms, a ground-chamber full of muskets and powder, having escaped the tumultuous search of the janizaries. These they made seasonable use of. The Swedes fired close upon the multitude of Turks through the window and killed two hundred in less than half a quarter of an hour.

The cannon played against the house; but the stones being very soft, it only made holes and demolished nothing.

The khan of Tartary and the Pacha, who were desirous of taking the king alive, being ashamed

to lose men and employ an entire army against sixty persons, thought it proper to set fire to the house, to oblige the king to surrender. They ordered some arrows, twisted about with lighted matches, to be shot upon the roof; the house was immediately in flames. The roof all on fire was ready to tumble upon the Swedes. The king with a sedate air, gave orders to extinguish the fire and finding a little barrel full of liquor, he laid hold of it himself and, with the assistance of two Swedes, threw it upon the place where the fire was most violent. He then discovered that it was full of brandy; but the hurry, inseparable from such a state of confusion, hindered him from thinking of it before. The fire raged with redoubled fury. The king's apartment was consumed and the great hall where the Swedes were, was filled with a terrible smoke, mixed with gusts of fire, that came in through the doors of the neighbouring apartments. One half of the roof had fallen in and the other tumbled down outside the house, broken by the flames.

A centinel named Walberg, ventured in this extremity to cry for a surrender. What a strange

man, said the king, is this, to imagine that it is not more glorious to be burnt than taken prisoner ! Another centinel named Rosen, had the thought to say, that the chancery-house, which was but fifty paces off, had a stone-roof and was proof against fire ; that it would be well to sally out and gain that house and there stand upon their defence. A true Swede, cried the king : then he embraced the guard and made him a colonel upon the spot. Come on my friends, said he, take all the powder and ball you can and let us gain the chancery, sword in hand.

The Turks, who encompassed the house, which was enveloped in flames, saw with a mixture of admiration and fear, that the Swedes did not quit it. But their astonishment was still greater, when they saw the doors open and the king and his men fall upon them like desperadoes. Charles and his principal officers were armed with swords and pistols. Every one fired two pistols at once the instant the door opened and in the twinkling of an eye throwing away their pistols and drawing their swords, they drove the Turks back more than fifty paces ; but the mo-



ment after this little troop was surrounded. The king, who was booted according to custom, hitched his spurs and fell. Immediately twenty-one janizaries fell upon him. He threw his sword into the air to save himself the pain of surrendering it. The Turks took him to the Pacha's quarters, some taking hold of his legs and others of his arms as a sick person is carried, for fear of incommoding him.

As soon as the king saw himself in their hands, the violence of his temper and the fury which so long and desperate a fight would naturally inspire, gave place at once to a gentle and calm behaviour. Not one impatient word fell from him; not a frown of anger. On the contrary he looked upon the janizaries with a smile and they carried him crying *Alla*, with a mixture of indignation and respect. His officers were taken at the same time and stripped by the Turks and Tartars. It was on the 12th of February, 1713, that this strange adventure happened and which was still followed by some extraordinary consequences.

## BOOK VII.

*The Turks remove Charles to Dimirtash. King Stanislaus is taken at the same time. Bold action of M. de Villelongue. Revolutions in the Seraglio. Battle in Pomerania. Altona burnt by the Swedes. Charles at length sets out to return to his states. His strange manner of travelling. Arrival at Stralsund. Charles's disgrace. Successes of Peter the Great, with his triumphal entry into Petersburgh.*

THE Pacha of Bender gravely waited for Charles in his tent, having one Marco an interpreter with him. He received the prince with great respect and begged him to rest upon a sopha, but the king not even deigning to notice the Turk's civilities, continued standing in his tent.

Blessed be the Almighty, said the Pacha, that your majesty is alive. Bitter was my despair that your majesty forced me to execute his highness's orders. The king, who for his part was only vexed that his three hundred soldiers had suffered themselves to be taken in their intrench-

ments, said to the Pacha, Ah, if they had defended themselves as they ought, we should not have been forced these ten days. Alas, said the Turk, this is courage grossly misemployed. He then had the king conducted, on a horse richly caparisoned, to Bender. His Swedes were either killed or taken. All his equipage, goods and papers and the best of his baggage, were plundered or burnt. In the roads, were seen the Swedish officers almost naked, chained two and two and following the Tartars and janizaries on foot. The chancellor and general officers were in the same condition ; they were slaves to the soldiers, to whose share they fell.

Ismael Pacha having brought the king to his seraglio at Bender, gave him his own apartment, where he was served like a king, but not without the precaution of a guard of janizaries at the room-door. A bed was prepared for him ; but he threw himself down upon a sophia in his boots and fell fast asleep. An officer, that stood near, in waiting, put him a cap on, which the king threw off at his first waking and the Turk was surprised to see a sovereign sleeping in his boots

and bare-headed. In the morning Ismael introduced Fabricius to the king. Fabricius found the prince with his clothes torn, his boots, hands and whole person covered with dust and blood ; his eye-brows burnt, but yet, even in that condition, his aspect was serene. He threw himself on his knees, unable to utter a word ; but soon recovering by the king's free and mild behaviour, he resumed his usual familiarity with him and they began to converse with pleasantry upon the battle of Bender. I am told, said Fabricius, that you killed twenty janizaries with your own hand. Well, well, said the king, a story never loses by telling. In the middle of this conversation, the Pacha brought, to the king, his favourite Grothusen and colonel Ribbins, whom he had the generosity to redeem at his own expence. Fabricius undertook to ransom all the other prisoners.

Jeffreys, the English envoy joined him in the expence. A Frenchman whom curiosity had brought to Bender and who had written some account of these affairs, also gave what he could. These strangers, assisted by the Pacha's advice

and money, redeemed not only the officers, but likewise their clothes out of the hands of the Turks and Tartars.

The next morning they conveyed the captive king in a chariot, covered with scarlet, towards Adrianople. His treasurer Grothusen was with him. The chancellor Mullern and some officers followed in another carriage. Many were on horseback and when they cast their eyes upon the king's chariot, they could not refrain from tears. The Pacha was at the head of the escort. Fabricius represented to him that it was a shame the king should be without a sword and begged one might be given him. God forbid! said the Pacha, he would cut our beards for us. However, he restored it to him some hours after.

While they were thus carrying, as a prisoner and disarmed, the king, who a few years before had given law to so many countries, had been arbiter of the north and the terror of all Europe, in the self same place appeared another instance of the frailty of human greatness.

King Stanislaus had been seized on the Turkish

territory and was carried prisoner to Bender at the time that they were conveying Charles XII. from it.

Stanislaus, unsupported by the hand that made him king, having no money and consequently no friends in Poland, retired first into Pomerania and as he was not able to preserve his own kingdom, had done his best to defend his benefactor's.

He went himself to Sweden to hasten the succours that were wanted in Pomerania and Livonia. He had done all that could be expected from the friend of Charles XII.

At this time the first king of Prussia, a prince of great wisdom, becoming uneasy and with reason at the near approach of the Moscovites, contemplated a treaty with king Augustus and the republic of Poland, to send back the Russians and make Charles XII. himself a party in the league. Three great events were to be the consequence of it; the peace of the north, the return of Charles into his states and the opposition of a barrier to the Russians, who were now become formidable to Europe. The preliminary of this treaty whereon the public tranquillity depended was the abdi-

cation of Stanislaus. Stanislaus not only acceded to it, but he took upon himself to be the negotiator of that peace which must deprive him of his crown. Necessity, the public weal, the glory of the sacrifice, and the interest of Charles to whom he owed every thing and whom he loved, resolved him. He wrote to the king at Bender, laying open to the king of Sweden the state of his affairs, misfortunes and the remedy. He conjured him not to oppose an abdication become necessary by circumstances and honourable in its motives. He pressed him not to sacrifice the Swedish interests to those of an unfortunate friend, who felt no regret in sacrificing himself to the general good.

Charles XII. received these letters at Varnitza and said, with displeasure, to the courier, before a good many witnesses : If my friend will not be a king, I shall find no difficulty in making another. Stanislaus was bent upon the sacrifice which Charles refused. These times were destined for extraordinary sentiments and actions. Stanislaus resolved to go himself and prevail upon Charles and he hazarded more to abdicate, than he had

to possess himself of a throne. One evening at ten o'clock, he stole away from the Swedish army which he commanded in Pomerania and set out with baron Sparre, who was afterwards ambassador in England and France and another colonel. He assumed the name of Haran, a Frenchman, then in the service of Sweden and who since died governor of Dantzic. He skirted all the enemies army, was several times arrested and released upon a passport obtained under the name of Haran and at length arrived, after many dangers, on the frontiers of Turkey. When he reached Moldavia, he sent baron Sparre back to his army and entered Yassy the Moldavian capital: thinking himself safe in a country where the king of Sweden had been so respected, he had little suspicion of what was going on there.

· They demanded of him who he was and he called himself the major of a regiment in the service of the king of Sweden. On the mention of that name, he was arrested and carried before the hospadar of Moldavia, who already knowing from the newspapers that Stanislaus had disappeared from his army, had some suspicions of the



truth. The king's person which was very easy to recognise, the face full and pleasing and an unusual mildness of look, had been described to him.

The hospadar interrogated him with several captious questions and lastly asked him what post he filled in the Swedish army. Stanislaus and the hospadar spoke Latin. Major Sum, said Stanislaus. *Immo maximus es*, answered the Moldavian and immediately presenting him with a chair of state, treated him as a king; but it was as a captive king and a strict guard was placed round a Greek convent in which he was forced to remain until the sultan's orders arrived.

The news reached the pacha during the time he was accompanying the carriage of the king of Sweden. The pacha told Fabricius, who coming up to the chariot of Charles XII. acquainted him that he was not the only king a prisoner in the hands of the Turks and that Stanislaus was in the custody of soldiers a few miles from him. My dear Fabricius, said Charles, run and tell him never to make peace with king Augustus and assure him that we shall quickly have a change in

our affairs. Such was Charles's inflexibility in his opinion, that though deserted in Poland, pursued in his own dominions and led prisoner in a Turkish litter, without knowing where he was to be carried to, he boldly reckoned upon his fortune, not doubting but the Ottoman Porte would assist him with 100,000 men.

Fabricius, with the pacha's leave to go with the message, attended by a Janizary, hastened to perform his commission. At some miles distance, he met the body of soldiers that guarded Stanislaus and spoke to one that rode in the middle of them, in a French dress and indifferently mounted. He asked him, in German, where the king of Poland was? It proved to be Stanislaus to whom he spoke and whom he did not know in that disguise. Ah, what, said the king, do you no longer remember me? Fabricius then told him of the king of Sweden's sad condition and of his unshaken but fruitless resolutions.

When Stanislaus was near Bender, the pacha, who was returning, after having accompanied Charles XII. some miles, sent the king of Poland an Arabian horse, with magnificent furniture.

He was received at Bender with a discharge of the artillery and, bating his want of liberty, had no great cause to complain of the treatment he met with there. Charles was still proceeding on his way to Adrianople, which city was already full of the reported battle. The Turks both admired and condemned him; but the divan was so exasperated, that they threatened to confine him in one of the islands of the Archipelago.

The king of Poland and Stanislaus who did me the honour to acquaint me with the greater part of these particulars, likewise confirmed to me that it was proposed in the divan to confine him himself in an island of Greece, but after some months the grand signior relenting, let him go.

M. Desalleurs, who could have taken his part and prevented such an affront to all the kings of Christendom, was at Constantinople and so was M. de Poniatowski, the inexhaustible resources of whose fertile genius were always dreaded. Most of the Swedes at Adrianople were in prison and the sultan's throne seemed inaccessible on all sides to the complaints of the king of Sweden.

The marquis de Fierville secretly sent from France to Charles at Bender, was then at Adrianople. He dared to think of doing that prince a piece of service when he was either deserted or oppressed by all the world. He was luckily assisted in this design by a French gentleman, of ancient family, named Villelongue, in Champagne, an intrepid man, whose fortune at that time not being adequate to his courage and charmed besides with the fame of the king of Sweden, was come among the Turks with the view of engaging in that prince's service.

With this young man's help, M. de Fierville wrote a memorial, in the name of the king of Sweden, demanding justice of the sultan for the insult offered, in his person, to all crowned heads and against the real or suspected treachery of the khan and the pacha of Bender.

It contained an accusation of the vizier and other ministers, that they had been corrupted by the Moscovites, deceived the grand signior, prevented the king's letters getting to his highness and by these artifices drawn from the sultan that order, so contrary to Mussulman hospitality, in

violation of the law of nations and, in a manner so unworthy a great emperor, to attack, with twenty thousand men, a king who had none but his servants to defend him and who had depended upon the sacred word of the sultan.

When this memorial was written, it was necessary to get it translated into Turkish and written in a particular manner, upon a sort of paper that they never use but for what is presented to the sultan.

They went to some French interpreters, who were in the city, to get it done; but the king of Sweden's affairs were so desperate and the vizier declared so openly against him, that no interpreter dared even translate M. de Fierville's manuscript. They at length found out another foreigner, whose hand was not known at the Porte and who, for a good gratuity and assurance of profound secrecy, translated the memorial into Turkish and wrote it upon the right sort of paper. Baron d'Arvidson, a Swedish officer, counterfeited the king's signature and Fierville, who had the royal seal, affixed it to the writing and sealed it with the arms of Sweden. Villelongue undertook to deliver the packet, himself, to

the grand signior as he passed to the mosque, according to custom. A similar method had already been tried in presenting memorials to the sultan against his ministers; but that made the success of the present enterprise more difficult and the danger much greater.

The vizier, who foresaw that the Swedes would demand justice from his master and knew too well the consequence, from his predecessor's misfortunes, expressly forbade any person to come near the grand signior and particularly ordered, that whoever were seen about the mosque, with petitions, should be seized.

Villelongue knew the order and was not ignorant that he went with his head in his hand. However, taking off his French, he put on a Grecian habit and hiding the letter, he wished to present, in his bosom, went, pretty early, to the mosque, near where the grand signior must enter. He pretended madness and went forward dancing between two files of janizaries, through whom the sultan was to pass and dropped some pieces of money from his pockets, purposely, to take, from himself, the attention of the guards.

When the sultan was coming, they would have Villelongue got out of the way, but he fell on his knees and struggled with the Janizaries. At last his cap fell off and he was discovered, by his long hair, to be a Frank. He had several blows and was very ill used. The grand signior heard the scuffle and asked the cause. Villelongue cried as loud as he could, amman! amman! mercy! The sultan ordered them to let him approach. Villelongue ran in a moment, embraced his stirrup and presented the paper, saying, sued Crall Dan, It is the king of Sweden who gives it thee. The sultan put the letter into his bosom and continued his way to the mosque; Villelongue was however secured and imprisoned in one of the out-buildings of the seraglio.

The sultan, on leaving the mosque, after he had read the letter, resolved to examine the prisoner himself. What I here relate may perhaps appear incredible, but I advance nothing except on the faith of M. de Villelongue's own letters. When so brave a man asserts a fact, upon his honour, it deserves some attention. He then assured me, that the sultan put off his imperial

habit, as well as the particular turban which he wears and disguised himself as an officer of the Janizaries, which he often does, taking with him an old Maltese for an interpreter. By favour of this disguise, Villelongue enjoyed an honour which no Christian ambassador ever did ; he had a private conference of a quarter of an hour with the Turkish emperor. He did not fail to relate all the king of Sweden's hardships, accusing the ministers and demanding satisfaction with the greater freedom, because all the while he talked to the sultan, he was taught to believe that he was speaking to his equal. He, however, immediately recognized the grand signior, notwithstanding the prison was very dark and this made him the bolder in his conversation. The pretended officer of the Janizaries said to Villelongue, Christian, be assured, the sultan, my master, has the soul of an emperor and if this king of Sweden is in the right, he will do him justice. Villelongue was soon released and some weeks after there was a sudden change in the seraglio, which the Swedes affirm was owing to this single conference. The mufti was deposed, the khan



of the Tartars banished to Rhodes and the seraskier pacha of Bender sent to an island of the Archipelago.

The Ottoman Porte is so subject to such storms, that it is hard to say whether the sultan intended, by these sacrifices, to appease the king of Sweden. The treatment which that prince met with does not prove that the Porte was in any haste to please him.

Ali Coumourgi, the favourite, was suspected to have alone been at the bottom of all these changes, for some private interests. His pretence for banishing the khan of Tartary and the seraskier of Bender, was said to be their having given the king the twelve hundred purses, against the order of the grand signior. He placed on the Tartar throne the son of the deposed khan, a young man who cared little for his father and upon whom Ali Coumourgi greatly depended in the wars he had premeditated. In regard to the grand vizier Jussuf, he was not deposed, till Soliman pacha was declared prime vizier.

I must say, that M. de Villelongue and many Swedes, have assured me, that the letter he pre-

sented to the sultan in the king's name was the sole occasion of these changes at the Porte ; but M. de Fierville has, on his part, assured me quite the reverse. I have frequently known contradictions of this nature in accounts with which I have been entrusted. In this case, all that an historian can do is, to tell the plain matter of fact, without entering into the motives, confining himself exactly to what he knows, instead of diving into what he does not know.

Charles was at length carried to the little castle of Demirtash, near Adrianople, where crowds of Turks were waiting his arrival. He was conveyed, out of the chariot, to the castle, upon a Sopha ; but Charles, that he might not be seen by the multitude, put a cushion over his head.

After several days solicitation, the Porte consented to his residing at Demotica, a little town six leagues from Adrianople, near the famous river Hebrus, now called Marizza. Coumourgi said to Soliman, the grand vizier, go, tell the king of Sweden he may stay at Demotica as long as he lives ; I will be answerable that he will ask to leave it, of his own accord, before the year

is out; but be sure not to let him have any money.

Thus was the king removed to Demotica, where the Porte allowed a considerable thaim of provisions for him and his retinue, but only twenty-five crowns a day in money, to buy pork and wine, two sorts of provisions which the Turks never furnish. The purse of five hundred crowns a day, which he had at Bender, was withdrawn.

Before the king and his little court were well settled at Demotica, the grand vizier Soliman was deposed, and his place given to Ibrahim Molla, a man exceedingly haughty, brave and blunt. It may not be amiss to give some account of him, that all the viceroys of the Ottoman empire, on whom Charles's fortune so long depended, may be more particularly known.

He had been a common sailor, until the accession of the sultan Achmet the third; that emperor would often go disguised like a common man, in an or dervise and would slip, in an evening, into the coffee-houses and public places of Constantinople, to hear what was said of him and

himself to collect the people's sentiments. He one day heard Molla finding fault that the Turkish ships never brought home any prizes and swear if he were a captain, he would never come into the harbour of Constantinople without some ship or other of the infidels. The very next morning the grand signior gave him a ship and sent him cruising. In a few days after, the new captain returned with a Maltese bark and Genocse galley. At the end of two years he was made captain-general of the sea and at last, grand vizier. He was no sooner in his post, but he began to think he might do without the favourite and to make himself necessary, he promoted a war with the Moscovites. In order to this, he set up a tent near the castle where the king of Sweden lived.

There he invited the king to meet him with the new khan of the Tartars and the French ambassador. The king, the more haughty for his misfortunes, regarded as the keenest of affronts, that a subject should send to see him. He ordered his chancellor Mullern to go in his stead and lest the Turks should be deficient in respect

and force him to compromise his dignity, this prince, who carried every thing to the extreme, resolved to keep his bed during his whole stay at Demotica. This he did for ten months, under the pretence of being sick. None but the chancellor Mullern, Grothusen and colonel Dubens, ever ate with him. They had none of the conveniencies which the Franks make use of; they had been plundered of all at the affair of Bender, so that their meals were served with little pomp or elegance. They were forced to wait upon themselves and chancellor Mullern was cook in ordinary the whole time.

While Charles XII. was passing his life in bed, he received news of the desolation of all his provinces situate out of Sweden.

General Steinbock, famous for having driven the Danes from Scania and with a parcel of peasants beaten their best troops, still, for some time, maintained the glory of the Swedish arms. He defended Pomerania, Bremen and the king's remaining possessions in Germany, as long as he was able, but could not hinder the Saxons and Danes united, from laying siege to Stade, a strong

and important town near the Elbe, in the dutchy of Bremen. It was bombarded and burnt to ashes and the garrison obliged to surrender at discretion, before Steinbock could advance to their assistance.

This general had about 12,000 men, half of whom were cavalry, with which he pursued the enemy, though twice his own strength and at last came up with them at a place called Gadebush, near a river of that name. He came opposite to the Danes and Saxons, separated from them by a marsh, on the 20 of December 1712. The enemy, encamped behind this marsh, were supported by a wood: they had the advantage both of number and situation and there was no getting at them but over the marsh, through the fire of their artillery.

Steinbock crossed, at the head of his troops and advancing in order of battle, began one of the most bloody and severe engagements that had ever happened between those two rival nations. After a sharp encounter of three hours, the Danes and Saxons were defeated and left the field of battle.

In this battle it was, that a son of king Augustus, by the countess de Konigsmarck, known by the name of the count of Saxe, received his first diments of the art of war; the same count Saxe, who has since had the honour to be chosen duke of Courland; he wanted nothing but force to make good the most indisputable right that any man can have to dominion; I mean the unanimous suffrages of a people. He subsequently acquired glory more substantial by saving France at the battle of Fontenoy, conquering Flanders and meriting the reputation of the greatest general of his time. He commanded a regiment at Gadebush, where he had a horse killed under him. I have heard him say, that all the Swedes maintained their ranks and even, when the day was decided and their enemies dead at their feet, of the front rank of those brave troops, not one Swedish soldier, durst even stoop to strip them, till prayers were over on the field of battle; so very exact were they in observing that strict discipline their king had always used them to.

Steinbock, after this victory, bearing in mind that the Danes had reduced Stade to ashes, re-

solved to be revenged upon Altena, which belongs to the king of Denmark. Altena is below Hamburg upon the river Elbe, which is navigable for large vessels into the harbour. The king of Denmark had granted this city many privileges, with an intention to make it a place of flourishing trade. Already had the industry of the Altenese, encouraged by the wise views of the king, began to place their city on a footing with rich and commercial towns. It excited the jealousy of Hamburg, which desired nothing so much as its destruction. When Steinbock came in sight of the place, he sent a trumpet to bid them evacuate it with their effects, for he was resolved to destroy their town immediately.

The magistrates came and threw themselves at his feet, offering a ransom of a hundred thousand crowns. Steinbock demanded two hundred thousand. The Altenese besought that they might have time to send to their correspondents at Hamburg and assured him they would bring that sum by the next day. The general told them he must have it within the hour, or would burn the town without delay.



His troops were in the suburbs, torches in hand and the town had no defence but a poor wooden gate and a dry ditch. The miserable Altenese were forced to fly from their houses at midnight, on the 9th of January, 1713. The season was rigorously cold and a violent north wind helped to spread the flames more rapidly in the city and to render more insupportable the extremities to which the people were reduced in the open air. Men and women, bending under the load of their goods, fled weeping and lamenting to the neighbouring hills, which were covered with ice. Paralytic old people were carried by the young upon their shoulders. Women, newly brought to bed, escaped with their infants and died of cold upon the road, as they distantly contemplated the flames which were consuming their patrimony. The Swedes set fire to the town before the people were well got out of it. It burnt from midnight till ten o'clock in the morning. The houses being mostly of timber were entirely consumed, so that, by morning, there was no vestige of a town ever having been there.

The aged, the sick and the most delicate women, who had lodged upon the ice while their houses were burning, dragged their limbs to the gates of Hamburgh and begged they might be opened to save their lives ; but they refused to admit them, because Altena had been visited with some infectious diseases and the inhabitants of Altena were not in such esteem with the Hamburghers, as to induce them to expose themselves, by admitting them into the city. Thus the greater part of these poor wretches died under the walls of Hamburgh, calling heaven to witness the barbarity of the Swedes and the no less inhuman Hamburghers.

All Germany exclaimed against this proceeding. The ministers and generals of Poland and Denmark wrote to count Steinbock, complaining of his great cruelty, which being done without necessity, could have no excuse and must excite heaven and earth against him.

Steinbock answered, that he had never been carried to these extremities, but for the purpose of teaching the enemies of the king, his master, not, in future, to wage war like barbarians, and to

make them respect the law of nations ; that they had filled Pomerania with their cruelties, desolated that beautiful country and sold nearly a hundred thousand people to the Turks ; that his torches, which had lain Altena in ashes, were reprisals for the red-hot shot whereby Stade had been destroyed.

With such fury was it that the Swedes and their enemies carried on the war. If Charles XII. could but have then appeared in Pomcrania, he might possibly have retrieved his former fortune. His armies, though far out of his presence, were still animated by his spirit ; but the absence of the chief is always attended with danger to his affairs and prevents the improvement of victories. Steinbock lost in detail all he had gained in those signal actions, which at a better season might have been decisive.

With all his successes, he could not prevent the Moscovites, Saxons and Danes, from joining. They seized his quarters and he lost numbers of his men in various skirmishes. Two thousand of them were drowned in passing the Eider, on their way to winter in Holstein ; all these losses were

irremediable in a country where he was surrounded on every side by potent enemies.

He wished to defend the country of Holstein against Denmark; but notwithstanding his subterfuges and efforts, the country was lost, the whole army destroyed and Steinbock himself taken prisoner.

Pomerania, with the exception of Stralsund, the isle of Rugen and some neighbouring places, being defenceless, became a prey to the allies and was sequestered in the hands of the king of Prussia. The states of Bremen were filled with Danish garrisons. At the same time the Russians over-ran Finland and beat the Swedes, who had lost their confidence and being inferior in numbers, had no longer the superiority in valour over their experienced foes.

To complete the misfortunes of Sweden, the king was resolved to stay at Demotica and still buoyed himself up with the vain expectation of that assistance from the Turks, which he could look to no more.

Ibrahim Molla, that proud vizier, who had

been so obstinately bent upon a war with the Moscovites, in opposition to the favourite, was strangled between two doors.

The place of vizier was now become so dangerous, that none daring to fill it, for six months, it remained vacant. Ali Coumourgi, the favourite, at length took the title of grand vizier. All the king of Sweden's hopes then vanished, for he knew Coumourgi would never befriend him further than accorded with his own ends.

He had been buried, at Demotica, in oblivion and inactivity for eleven months and this leisure following close upon the most violent exercise, made that illness real which, before, was but feigned. Throughout the whole of Europe, he was believed to be dead. The council of regency, which he established at Stockholm when he left it, received no tidings of him. The senate went in a body to request the princess Ulrica Eleonora, the king's sister, to take upon her the regency in her brother's absence. She accepted it, but finding the senate wanted to force her to make peace with the czar and the king of Denmark, who were attacking Sweden on all sides, this princess,

rightly, judging, that the king, her brother, would never ratify the peace, she resigned the regency and sent a full detail of the affair to Turkey.

The king received his sister's letter at Demotica and those despotic notions which he had imbibed at his birth, made him forget that Sweden had been free and that the senate formerly governed the kingdom conjointly with the kings. He looked upon that body merely as a set who wanted to govern the family in their master's absence and wrote to them, that if they pretended to govern, he would send them one of his boots, from which they should take their orders.

To prevent therefore these presumptive attempts in Sweden against his authority and that he might defend his country, having now no more hope from the Ottoman Porte and depending only on himself, he signified to the grand vizier that he wished to be gone and to return by the way of Germany.

M. Desalleurs, the French ambassador, who transacted all the affairs of Sweden, made the proposal on his part. Well, said the vizier, was I not right, in saying that the king of Sweden

would be glad to go before the year was at an end? Tell him, he has his choice either to stay or go, but let him resolve and fix the day for his departure, that he may not involve us a second time in the trouble of Bender.

Count Desalleurs softened the harshness of those expressions to the king. The day was named; but Charles, before he left Turkey, was willing to figure in the pomp of a king, notwithstanding he was in the wretchedness of a fugitive. He made Grothusen his ambassador extraordinary and sent him, in form, to take his leave at Constantinople, with a train of fourscore persons, all superbly dressed.

But the embassy was not so splendid as the secret shifts to which he was put to furnish the expence of it, were humiliating.

M. Desalleurs lent the king forty thousand crowns; Grothusen had agents at Constantinople, who borrowed, in his name, at the rate of fifty per cent. interest, a thousand crowns of a Jew, of an English merchant two hundred pistoles, and a thousand francs of a Turk.

Thus they got sufficient to enable them to act

the splendid farce of the Swedish embassy. At Constantinople Grothusen had all the honours that the Porte paid to ambassadors extraordinary of kings, upon the day of their audience. All this was done with a view to get money out of the grand vizier, but that minister was inexorable.

Grothusen made a proposal to borrow a million of the Porte. The vizier drily answered, that his master knew how to give when he had a mind, but it was beneath his dignity to lend; that the king should have all things proper for his journey in abundance and in a manner becoming him who gave it and that perhaps the Porte might make him some present in pure gold, but he would not have him expect it.

On the first of October, 1714, the king of Sweden set out to leave Turkey. A Capigi pacha with six chiaux, went to attend him from the castle of Demirtash, whither he had removed a few days before. He presented him, from the grand signior, with a large scarlet tent, embroidered with gold, a sabre, the hilt of which was set with jewels, eight beautiful Arabian horses,



with the richest saddles and stirrups of massive silver. It is not derogatory to this history to relate, that an Arabian groom, who took care of the horses, gave the king their genealogy; it is a custom of long standing with that people, who seem to take more notice of the nobility of horses than of men, which is not so out of reason, because amongst animals the races that are taken care of and are not crossed, are never known to degenerate.

The convoy consisted of sixty carriages, laden with all sorts of provisions and three hundred horses. The Capigi pacha, knowing that several Turks had lent money to the king's attendants at excessive interest, told me, that usury being forbidden by the Mahometan law, he begged his majesty to liquidate all his debts and order the resident, whom he might leave at Constantinople, to pay the principal only. No, said the king, if my servants have given notes for an hundred crowns, I will pay them, though they never received but ten for them.

The Turks, to shew the more respect to their guest, made him travel but very short days jour-

neys ; this respectful dilatoriness however tried the king's patience. He got up as usual at three in the morning. As soon as he was drest, he went himself and called up the Capigi and Chiaoux and ordered them to march in the dark. This way of travelling suited but ill with Turkish gravity and the king was pleased to find it so and said he should take some little revenge for the affair of Bender.

When he was approaching the Turkish frontiers, Stanislaus was going from them by another way into Germany, intending to retire into the duchy of Deux-Ponts, a country that borders on the palatinate of the Rhine and Alsace and which from the time it was united to that crown by Christina's successor, Charles X. had belonged to the kings of Sweden. Charles assigned to Stanislaus, the revenue of this dutchy, then reckoned to be about seventy thousand crowns. Thus ended, for this time, so many projects, wars and expectations. Stanislaus could and would have made as advantageous an agreement with Augustus ; but the insuperable obstinacy of Charles made him lose his lands and actual wealth

in Poland, that he might preserve the name of king.

This prince resided in the duchy of Deux-Ponts till Charles's death ; that province then falling to a prince of the Palatine-house, he chose to retire to Wissembourg, in French Alsace. Upon this M. Sum, envoy from king Augustus, laid a complaint before the duke of Orleans, regent of France. The duke of Orleans answered M. Sum in these memorable words : Sir, let the king your master know that France has ever been the asylum for kings in misfortune.

The king of Sweden having come to the confines of Germany, found that the emperor had given orders for his reception in all places subject to him, with proper state. The towns and villages which the quarter-masters had specified beforehand as in his route, made preparations for his reception. All the people were waiting with impatience to get a sight of that extraordinary man whose conquests and misfortunes, whose least actions and even his repose, had made so much noise, both in Europe and Asia. But Charles had no inclination to go through all this

pomp, nor to make an exhibition of the prisoner of Bender ; he had even resolved never to re-enter Stockholm, till he had retrieved his adverse by more auspicious fortune.

When he arrived at Targowitz, on the borders of Transylvania, after he had dismissed his Turkish escort, he called his people together in a barn and bid them all take no thought for him, but make the best of their way to Stralsund in Pomerania, upon the coast of the Baltic sea, about three hundred leagues from where they were.

He took nobody with him, but two officers, Rosen and During and parted chearfully with his retinue, leaving them in astonishment, apprehension and sorrow. To disguise himself, he took a black peruke, for he always wore his own hair, put on a gold laced hat, with a grey coat and blue cloak, passing for a German officer and rode post on horseback, with his two travelling companions.

In all the way he kept clear, as much as he possibly could, of any place that belonged to his open or concealed enemies and so by the way of Hungary, Moravia, Austria, Bavaria, Wir-

temberg, the Palatinate, Westphalia and Mecklenburg, he made almost the tour of Germany and lengthened his road by one half.

At the close of the first day, after having rode without stopping, young During who was not inured to such excessive fatigues, like the king of Sweden, fainted away when getting off his horse. The king who would not stay a moment on the road, asked During, as soon as he came to himself, What money he had ? During answered, About a thousand crowns in gold. Give me half, said the king, I see that you are not in a situation to follow me, I will proceed alone. During begged him to stay only three hours and he was sure by that time he would be able to remount his horse and follow his majesty and conjured him to think of the risks he was going to run. The king would not be persuaded and made him give up the five hundred crowns and called for horses. Then During fearful of the consequence of the king's resolution, bethought himself of an innocent stratagem. He took the postmaster aside and pointing to the king of Sweden, Friend, said he, this is my cousin, we are going upon the

same business together, he sees that I am indisposed and will not stay for me but three hours ; prithee give him the worst horse in your stable and let me have a carriage, or some kind of a post chaise.

He put a couple of ducats into the hand of the postmaster, who complied with his desires to a nicety. The king had a horse that was both lame and restive and at ten o'clock in a dark night, through snow, wind and rain, that monarch thus equipped, set out. His fellow-traveller, after a few hours rest, again proceeded, in a chaise, with very good horses ; some miles off at day-break, he overtook the king of Sweden, who being unable to get his horse a step further, was walking on foot towards the next stage.

He was forced to get into the carriage with During ; he slept upon the straw and they never afterwards stopped, but went forward on horseback all day and sleeping in a chaise all night.

After sixteen days travelling, nor more than once without danger of being taken, they at last upon the 21st of November 1714, reached the gates of Stralsund, at one o'clock in the morning.

The king called out to the centinel that he was a courier dispatched from Turkey by the king of Sweden and must speak immediately with general Ducker the governor of the place. The centinel answered, it was late, the governor was a-bed and he must stay till day-light.

The king replied that he came on affairs of consequence and declared that if they did not go directly and wake the governor, they should all be punished in the morning. At last a serjeant went and called the governor: Ducker thinking it might perhaps be one of the king of Sweden's generals, ordered the gates to be opened and the courier was brought up to his chamber.

Ducker, half asleep, asked him, What news of the king of Sweden? The king taking him by the arms, What said he, Ducker, have my most faithful subjects forgotten me? The general recognised the king, he could scarcely believe his eyes and jumping out of bed, embraced his master's knees with tears of joy. The news was all over the town in an instant. Every body got up; the soldiers surrounded the governor's house. The streets were filled with the inhabitants, asking each other

is it true that the king is here? The windows were illuminated, the conduits ran with wine to the light of a thousand flambeaux and discharge of artillery.

However, the king was put to bed, which was more than he had been for sixteen days; they were forced to cut off his boots, his legs were so swollen with the fatigue. He had neither linen nor clothes and they provided him, temporarily, with whatever could be got to fit in the town. When he had slept some hours, the first thing he did was to review his troops and inspect the fortifications. That very day he sent out orders into all parts for renewing the war with more vigour than ever against all his enemies. All these particulars were confirmed to me by the count de Croissy, ambassador to that prince, after M. Fabricius had originally given them to me.

Europe was now in a condition very different from what it was when Charles left it in 1709.

The war which had so long desolated all the south, that is to say Germany, England, Holland, France, Spain, Portugal and Italy, was at an end. This general peace was owing to some private quarrels that happened at the court of



England. The earl of Oxford, an able minister and Lord Bolingbroke, a man of the finest wit and eloquence of the age, had got the better of the famous duke of Marlborough and persuaded queen Anne to make a peace with Louis XIV. France being no longer in hostility with England, soon forced the other powers to an accommodation.

Philip the Vth, grandson to Louis XIV. began to reign peaceably over the ruins of the Spanish monarchy. The emperor of Germany being master of Naples and Flanders, was firmly settled in his vast dominions. Louis XIV. wanted nothing more than to finish his long career in peace.

Queen Anne of England died 10th August 1714, hated by half her people for having given peace to so many nations. Her brother James Stuart, an unfortunate prince, almost excluded from the throne, at his birth, not appearing in England to claim a succession, which in order to settle on him, new laws would have been made in case his party could have prevailed ; George the First, elector of Hanover, was unanimously acknowledged king of Great Britain. The throne be-

longed to this elector, not by right of blood, although he descended from a daughter of James, but by virtue of an act of parliament.

George being in years when he was called to reign over a people whose language he did not understand and where every thing was strange to him, looked upon himself rather as elector of Hanover than as king of England. All his ambition was to aggrandize his German dominions. He went almost every year to revisit his subjects, by whom he was adored. In other things, he was better pleased to enjoy himself as a man, than as a king. The pomp of royalty was to him an oppressive burthen. His delight was to live with a few old courtiers, whom he admitted to his familiarity. He was not the king that made the greatest figure in Europe ; but he was one of the wisest and perhaps the only one, who could taste, upon a throne, the pleasures of friendship and private life.

The changes in the north were of another nature ; the kings there were at war and all united against the king of Sweden.

Augustus had long remounted the throne of

Poland by the assistance of the czar and with the consent of the emperor of Germany : Queen Anne and the states general, who, all guarantees for the treaty of Altranstad when Charles XII. could impose laws, thought no more of their guaranty when he was no more to be feared.

But Augustus was not quite so easy on his throne. The republic of Poland, in resuming its king, soon resumed its fears of arbitrary power ; it was in arms to make him submit to the *pacta conventa*, a solemn compact between the king and the people ; seeming to have called him home for nothing else but to make war upon him. In the beginning of these troubles not a syllable was said of Stanislaus ; his party, in all appearance, was come to nothing and in Poland they remembered nothing more of the king of Sweden than as of a torrent, which had for a while borne down all before it.

Pultowa and the absence of Charles XII. by which Stanislaus fell, had also occasioned the fall of the duke of Holstein, Charles's nephew, who was dispossessed of his states by the king of Denmark. The king of Sweden tenderly loved the

father and was concerned and humbled at the son's misfortunes and losses: besides, as he never did any thing but for glory, the fall of princes, which himself had made or set up, was as grievous, to him, as the loss of so many provinces.

It now was who should profit most by his losses. Frederick William, the new king of Prussia, who seemed as much inclined to war as his father was to peace, began by getting Stetin and a part of Pomerania, to which he had some claims, delivered up to him, for four hundred thousand crowns, which he advanced to the king of Denmark and the czar.

George, the elector of Hanover, who had become king of England, had likewise sequestered into his hands the duchy of Bremen and Verden, which the king of Denmark had assigned to him, as a pledge, for sixty thousand pistoles. Thus were the spoils of Charles XII. disposed of and whoever was in possession, became, by their own interests, as dangerous enemies to him as those who had taken them.

As to the czar, he was indeed the most to be feared. His former defeats, his victories, nay his

very errors, his diligence to learn himself and care to teach his subjects what he had learnt, with his incessant labours, made him a great man in every sense. Riga, Livonia, Ingria, Carelia, half of Finland, so many countries which had been won by Charles's ancestors, were under the Moscovite yoke.

Peter Alexiowitz, who twenty years before had not so much as a cock-boat on the Baltic, then saw himself master of those seas, with a fleet of thirty large ships of the line, at his command.

He built one of these ships with his own hands ; he was the best carpenter, the best admiral and the best pilot of the north. He himself had sounded every difficult passage from the gulph of Bothnia to the ocean, had combined the labours of a common sailor with the experience of a philosopher and the designs of an emperor and as he had gradually and by his many victories, attained the rank of admiral, so he intended to make himself a general by land.

While prince Gallitzin, a general bred up under him and one of those who best seconded his designs, completed the conquest of Finland, took

the town of Vasa and beat the Swedes : the emperor put to sea to conquer the isle of Aland, situate in the Baltic, twelve leagues from Stockholm.

He went upon this expedition in the beginning of July, 1714, while his rival Charles XII. kept his bed at Demotica. He embarked at Cronslot, a harbour which he had built a few years before four miles from Petersburg. This new port, the fleet which it contained, the officers and sailors who manned it, were all his own work and whichever way he turned his eyes, he saw nothing but what he had, in a manner, himself created.

The Russian fleet came to Aland on the 15th of July ; it consisted of thirty ships of the line, eighty galleys and a hundred half-galleys, with 20,000 soldiers. Admiral Apraxin was commander and the Russian emperor was rear-admiral. The Swedish fleet commanded by vice-admiral Erinchild, came up with them on the 16th. Notwithstanding it was one-third weaker, it fought for three hours. The czar attacked admiral Erinchild's ship and took her after an obstinate engagement.

The same day he landed sixteen thousand men at Aland and having taken a great many Swedish soldiers who could not get on board Erinchild's fleet, he carried them prisoners into his own ships. He then returned to his port of Cronsloet, with Erinchild's ship and three lesser ones, a frigate and six galleys that he had taken in this engagement.

From Cronsloet he went on to Petersburg, followed by the whole of his victorious fleet and the ships he had captured from the enemy. He was saluted with a triple discharge of 150 guns, after which he made his triumphal entry, which pleased him still more than that at Moscow, because he received those honours in his favourite city, in a place where but ten years before there was not so much as a hut and where he then saw thirty-four thousand five hundred houses and lastly, because he was not only himself at the head of a victorious navy, but of the first Russian fleet that had ever been seen in the Baltic and among a people to whom, before his time, even the name of a fleet was unknown.

At Petersburg, the ceremonies observed were

much the same as those which had before graced the triumph at Moscow. The Swedish vice-admiral was the principal ornament of this new triumph. Peter Alexiowitz appeared there as rear-admiral. A Russian boyard named Romanowsky, who represented the czar upon solemn occasions, was seated upon a throne with twelve senators at his sides. The rear-admiral presented him with a narrative of his victory and was thereupon made vice-admiral in consideration of his services ; a whimsical ceremony, but not without its use, in a country where military subordination was one of the novelties which the czar had introduced.

The Moscovite emperor thus victorious over the Swedes by sea and land and having helped to drive them out of Poland, was master there in his turn. He made himself mediator between the republic and Augustus, an honour perhaps equal to that of having set up the king. All the fortune and splendour of Charles had now gone to the czar, who really made a better use of them than his rival, for all his successes were applied to the benefit of his country. If he took a town, the in-



dustry of the artisans was all transferred to Petersburg. The manufactures, arts and sciences of the provinces taken from Sweden, were transported to Moscovy; his states were enriched by his victories, which certainly gave him the best excuse that can be made for any conqueror.

Sweden on the contrary, deprived of all her transmarine provinces, had neither trade money, nor credit. Her veteran troops, once so formidable, fell victims either to the sword or to want. Above one hundred thousand Swedes were slaves in the vast dominions of the czar and almost as many more had been sold to the Turks and Tartars. The population was visibly decreased, but hope revived as soon as they knew the king was at Stralsund.

Such strong impressions of admiration and respect reigned in the hearts of all his subjects, that the country youths offered themselves in crowd to be enlisted, although there were not hands enough to cultivate the land.

## BOOK VIII.

*Charles marries the princess his sister to the Prince of Hesse. He is besieged in Stralsund. Escapes to Sweden. Enterprize of Baron Gortz, his first minister. Schemes for a reconciliation with the czar and a descent into England. Charles besieges Fredericshal in Norway. Is killed. His character. Gortz is beheaded.*

THE king, during these preparations, gave his only surviving sister, Ulrica Eleonora in marriage to Frederick, prince of Hesse Cassel.

The queen dowager, grandmother of Charles the XII. and the princess, at fourscore years of age, did the honours of this entertainment, on the 4th of April, 1715, in the palace of Stockholm and died soon after.

This marriage was not honoured with the presence of the king, he remained at Stralsund employed in completing the fortifications of that important place, which was menaced by the kings of Denmark and Prussia. However he made his

brother-in-law generalissimo of his armies in Sweden. This prince had served the states-general in the French wars and was esteemed a good general, a circumstance which contributed not a little to facilitate his marriage with the sister of Charles XII.

Misfortunes now succeeded each other as rapidly as his victories had once done. In June 1715, the king of England's German forces, with those of Denmark, invested the strong town of Wismar. The Danes and Saxons united, to the number of thirty-six thousand, marched at the same time in order to lay siege to Stralsund. Not far from Stralsund, five Swedish ships were sunk by the kings of Denmark and Prussia. The czar then kept the Baltic with twenty large men of war and one hundred and fifty transports, containing thirty thousand men. He threatened a descent on Sweden, appearing on the coast of Helsinburg and Stockholm by turns. All Sweden was in arms upon the coasts in momentary expectation of an invasion. His land forces were at this time chasing the Swedes from post to post out of all the places they still

possessed in Finland towards the gulph of Bothnia. But the czar attempted nothing further.

At the mouth of the Oder, a river that divides Pomerania and which, after passing Stetin, falls into the Baltic, is a little island called Usedom. This place is from its situation of vast importance ; for it commands the Oder both on the right and left and whoever has it, is likewise master of the navigation of that river. The king of Prussia had dislodged the Swedes from this island, seizing upon that as well as Stetin, which he held sequestrated in his hands and all, as he said, for the sake of peace. The Swedes retook the isle of Usedom, in May 1715. They had two forts there, one called Suine, upon a branch of the Oder of that name, the other Pennamonder, of greater consequence, upon the other branch of the river. The two forts and indeed all the island were manned with but 250 Pomeranians, commanded by an old Swedish officer, named Kuze-Slerp, whose name well merits to be remembered.

On the 4th of August, the king of Prussia sent 1500 foot and 800 dragoons to disembark on the island. They arrived and landed without oppo-

sition on the side of the Suine, which fort the Swedish officer abandoned as the place of least importance and unwilling to divide his little company, he retired with them into the castle of Pennamonder, resolving to hold out to the last extremity.

They were therefore compelled to lay siege to it in form. Artillery was shipped for the purpose at Stetin and the Prussians were reinforced with 1000 foot and 400 horse. On the 18th the trenches were opened in two places, with a brisk battery of cannon and mortars. During the siege, a Swedish soldier, sent privately with a letter from Charles XII. found means to land on the island and slip into Pennamonder. He gave the commandant the letter, which was couched in these words :

Give no fire till the enemy comes to the brink of the fosse. Defend yourself to the last drop of blood. I commend you to your good fortune.

CHARLES.

Slerp having read the note, resolved to obey and to die, as he was ordered, for his master's

service. On the 22d, by day-break the assault took place. The besieged reserved their fire as directed and killed great numbers, but the fosse was thereby filled, the breach large and the besiegers too numerous. They entered the castle in two places at once. The commandant now thought only of selling his life dear and obeying the letter. He abandoned the breaches, where the enemy entered, intrenched his little company, who had all courage and fidelity enough to go with him and placed them near a bastion so that they could not be surrounded. The enemy came on, wondering he did not ask for quarter. He fought a whole hour and after he had lost half his soldiers, at last was killed with his lieutenant and major. There were then a hundred men left and one single officer, who asked their lives and were taken prisoners. In the commandant's pocket was found his master's letter, which was carried to the king of Prussia.

When Charles XII. was thus losing Usedom and the neighbouring islands, which were quickly taken, Wismar being ready to surrender, no longer having a fleet and Sweden itself in danger,

he was in the city of Stralsund and that place was already besieged by six and thirty thousand men.

Stralsund, a town famous throughout Europe for the siege the king of Sweden sustained there, is the strongest place in Pomerania. It is built between the Baltic and the lake of Franken, upon the streights of Gella. There is no way to it, by land, but over a narrow causeway, defended by a citadel and by fortifications, once thought inaccessible. It had a garrison of nine thousand men and more than all, the king of Sweden himself. The kings of Denmark and Prussia undertook the siege with an army of 36,000 men, consisting of Prussians, Danes and Saxons.

The honour of besieging Charles XII. was so engaging a motive that they surmounted all obstacles and the trenches were opened in the night of the 19th of October 1715.

The king of Sweden said, at the commencement of the siege, he wondered how any place well manned and fortified could be taken. Not but he had taken many towns himself in the course of his victories, but never any one by regular attack. The terror of his arms then carried all before him.

Besides, he did not judge of others by himself, nor held his enemies in sufficient esteem. The besiegers pushed forward their works with an activity and exertion which were seconded by a very singular accident.

It is well known that the Baltic has neither flux nor reflux. The intrenchment that covered the town being supported on the western side by an impracticable marsh and by the sea to the east, seemed out of the reach of insult. No one had observed, that in a strong westerly wind the waves of the Baltic roll back, in such a manner, to the east, as to leave but three feet water under the intrenchment, whilst its depth was always believed to be unfathomable. A soldier happening to fall from the top of the intrenchment, was surprised to find a bottom and imagining that his discovery might make his fortune, he deserted and went to the quarters of count Wackerbath, general of the Saxon forces, telling him that the sea was fordable and that it would be easy to penetrate the Swedes' intrenchments. The king of Prussia lost no time in taking advantage of the information,



The morrow, at midnight, the wind being still at west, lieutenant-colonel Koppen went into the water, followed by 1800 men, 2000 advanced at the same time upon the causeway that led to this intrenchment ; there was a general discharge of all the Prussian artillery and the Prussians and Danes made a feint on the other side.

The Swedes were confident they could overthrow those two thousand whom they saw advancing, apparently so rashly, by the causeway; but all at once, Koppen, with his 1800 men, entered the fortification from the side towards the sea. The Swedes, surrounded and surprised, could make no resistance and the post was carried after prodigious slaughter. Some of the Swedes fled towards the town; the besiegers pursued them and entered pell mell with the fugitives. Two officers and four Saxon soldiers were already upon the draw-bridge; but there was just time to raise it, they were taken and the town for this time was saved.

Four and twenty pieces of cannon were found in the intrenchments and were turned against Stralsund. The siege, after this first success, was

carried on with unremitting confidence and the town was cannonaded and bombarded almost without intermission.

Over against Stralsund, upon the Baltic, is the island of Rugen, which serves as a rampart to this place, whither the garrison and people could retire upon occasion, if they had boats to transport them. This island was of great consequence to Charles; he clearly foresaw that if once the enemy were masters of it, he should soon be invested both by sea and land and, according to every appearance, would be reduced to bury himself in the ruins of Stralsund, or else become a prisoner to the very enemies whom he had so long despised and on whom he had imposed such harsh laws. However, the ill state of his affairs had not allowed him to send a sufficient garrison to Rugen, where there were not more than two thousand troops.

The enemy had been, for three months, making all proper dispositions for a descent on that island, the landing on which was very difficult; but having built boats for the purpose, the prince of An-

halt, favoured by the weather, landed in Rugen, on the 15th of November, with 12,000 men.

The king, present every where, was in the island. He had joined his two thousand soldiers, who were intrenched, near a little haven, three leagues from the place where the enemy had landed. He put himself at their head and marched in the middle of the night in profound silence. The prince of Anhalt had already intrenched his troops, with a caution that seemed unnecessary. The officers who commanded under him had no expectation of being attacked the same night and thought Charles was at Stralsund. But the prince of Anhalt, who knew what Charles was capable of, ordered a deep fosse to be sunk with *cheveux de frise* upon the edge of it and took as much precaution as if he had to do with an army of superior force.

At two o'clock in the morning, Charles had reached the enemy, without making the least noise. His soldiers said to one another, pull up the *cheveux de frise*. These words were overheard by the centinels; the alarm was given in an

instant through the camp and the enemy was under arms. The king having taken up the *cheveux de frise*, saw a wide ditch before him. Ah, said he, is it possible? I did not expect this. The surprise did not in the least discourage him, he knew nothing of the number of troops disembarked and his enemies on their part were ignorant of the few they had to contend with. The obscurity of the night seemed favourable to Charles, he resolved in an instant and jumped into the ditch, accompanied by the boldest and all the rest were quickly after him. The *cheveux de frise* that were removed, the levelled earth, the trunks and branches of trees that could be found and the bodies of the dead who fell by random musket shot, served for fascines. The king, the generals who were with him, the officers and the most intrepid soldiers mounted the shoulders of each other, as at an assault. The fight began in the enemies camp. Swedish impetuosity at first threw the Danes and Prussians into disorder; but their number was too unequal; the Swedes were repulsed after a quarter of an hour's fighting and repassed the fosse. The prince of Anhalt then

pursued them into the plain, little thinking it was Charles himself flying before him. The unfortunate king rallied his troops in the open field and the fight was renewed with equal obstinacy on both sides. Grothusen, the king's favourite and general Dardoff, fell dead by his side. Charles passed over the body of the latter, who still breathed, during the fight. During, who had accompanied him, alone, in his journey from Turkey to Stralsund, was killed before his face.

In the heat of the battle, a Danish lieutenant, whose name I could never learn, recognised Charles and seizing his sword with one hand and with the other dragging him forcibly by the hair, yield, sir, said he, or I kill you. Charles had a pistol in his belt and with his left hand fired it at the officer, who died of the shot the next morning. The name of king Charles, which the Dane had pronounced, drew a crowd of enemies together in a moment. The king was surrounded. He received a musket shot under his left nipple. The wound, which he called a contusion, was two fingers deep. The king was on foot and in the utmost danger of being either

killed or taken. Count Poniatowski, at this instant, was fighting near his person. He had already saved his life at Pultowa and had the good fortune to preserve it once more in the battle of Rugen and to remount him on horseback.

The Swedes retired towards a part of the island named Alteferre, where was a fort they were yet masters of. From thence the king returned to Stralsund, obliged to abandon those brave troops who had served him so well in that expedition; they were all made prisoners of war two days after.

Among the prisoners, was that unfortunate French regiment, composed of the remains of the battle of Hochstet, which had gone into the service of king Augustus and afterwards into that of the king of Sweden. Most of the soldiers were incorporated into a new regiment of a son of the prince of Anhalt, who was their fourth master. In Rugen, the commander of this wandering regiment was then the very count de Villelongue, who had so generously ventured his life at Adrianople to serve Charles XII. He was taken with his troop and was but ill rewarded in

the sequel, for such signal services, fatigues and sufferings.

The king, after all these prodigies of valour which tended only to weaken him, shut up in Stralsund and nearly forced there, was the same as he had been before at Bender. He was surprised at nothing; in the day he was making cuts and intrenchments behind the walls and at night he made sorties upon the enemy. A breach was however beaten in Stralsund, the bombs rained upon the houses and half the town was reduced to ashes. The inhabitants, far from repining, were full of admiration at their master, whose temperance, fatigues and courage struck them with astonishment; they all became soldiers under him, following him in the sallies and were now as good as another garrison to him.

One day, as the king was dictating, to a secretary, some letters for Sweden, a bomb falling upon the house, came through the roof and burst very near the king's room. Half the floor fell to pieces, but the closet where the king was dictating being, in part, worked into a thick wall, was not shattered and by wonderful good fortune none of

the splinters came in at the door, though it was open. At the noise of the bomb and the confusion of the seemingly falling house, the Secretary dropped the pen from his hand. What ails you, said the king very calmly, why dont you write? The man could only bring out these words, The bomb, sir. Well, replied the king, and what has the bomb to do with the letter I am dictating to you? Go on.

An ambassador from France was then shut up, in Stralsund, with the king of Sweden. It was M. Colbert, count de Croissy, lieutenant general of the armies of France, brother to the marquis de Torcy, a famous minister of state and related to the great Colbert, whose name will be immortal in France. To send a man to the trenches, or on an embassy to Charles XII. was almost the same thing. The king would talk with Croissy for hours together, in places the most exposed; while people were falling on all sides by the bombs and cannons, without the king either perceiving there was any danger, or the ambassador caring even to give an intimation that there were places fitter for talking of business. Before the



siege, this minister took a deal of pains to bring about an accommodation between the king of Sweden and Prussia ; but the latter was too high and the other would not make any concessions. The count de Croissy had therefore the only satisfaction in his embassy, that he enjoyed an intimacy with this singular character. He has often slept by him upon the same cloak and by sharing with him his dangers and fatigues, he had acquired the right of speaking to him freely. Charles rather encouraged this boldness in those he had a regard for. He would sometimes say to Croissy, *Veni, maledicamus de rege*. Come, now for a little scandal on the king. This the ambassador told me himself.

Croissy stayed in the town till the thirteenth of November and then having the enemy's permission to go out, with his baggage, he took leave of the king of Sweden, whom he left among the ruins of Stralsund, with a garrison two-thirds destroyed, fully resolved to stand an assault.

In fact, the assault was made at the hornwork two days after ; the enemy twice got possession of it and twice were beaten off. The king al-

ways fought there among the grenadiers; at last numbers prevailed; the besiegers became masters of it. Charles still continued in the place two days, in momentary expectation of a general assault. On the 21st, he staid till midnight upon a little ravelin that was quite destroyed by the bombs and cannon. The next day the chief officers entreated him to stay no longer in a place which could not be defended. To retreat was now as dangerous as to stay. The Baltic was covered with Moscovite and Danish ships. In the port of Stralsund there was only a small bark with sails and oars. The extreme danger which made such a retreat glorious, induced Charles to consent to it. He embarked the 20th of December 1715, at night, with but ten persons. They were obliged to break the ice, with which the sea was covered, in the harbour. This painful labour took them up several hours before the vessel could make her way. The enemies' admirals had strict orders not to let Charles escape from Stralsund and to take him dead or alive. Happily they were to leeward and could not bear up to him. He ran a yet greater danger, in passing by

a place called la Babette, in sight of the island of Rugen, where the Danes had raised a battery of twelve guns. They fired upon the king. The sailors pressed every sail and ran to get clear of them. Two men were killed close by Charles, by one shot and by another the mast was shattered. In the midst of these dangers, the king came up with two of his ships that were cruising in the Baltic. On the next day Stralsund surrendered; the garrison were made prisoners of war and Charles landed at Isted in Scania and thence went to Carlscroon, in a very different condition from what he had quitted it fifteen years before, in a ship of one hundred and twenty guns, to give laws to the North.

Being so near his capital, it was expected he would have gone thither after so long absence; but his intention was not to return to it but after victories. Besides, he could not resolve to revisit a people who loved him and whom he was compelled to oppress, in order to defend himself against his enemies. He wished only to see his sister and sent for her to meet him near the lake Weter in Ostrogothia. He went thither post,

with only one servant to attend him and returned after staying a day with her.

At Carlscoon, where he stayed the winter, he ordered new levies to be made in his kingdom. He thought that all his subjects were only born to follow him to war and he had accustomed them to think so too. He enlisted many who were but fifteen years old. In several villages, there were none left but old men, children and women and in many places none but women were seen cultivating the ground.

It was yet more difficult for him to get a fleet. To supply that deficiency, commissions were given to privateers, who, having great privileges, to the ruin of the country, provided him some ships. These exertions were the last resources of Sweden. To support such expences, it was necessary to take the people's property. There was no sort of extortion that was not practised under the name of tax and impost. All the houses were searched and half of their provisions were laid hold of and carried into the king's stores; all the iron of the country was bought up on his account and government paid for it in paper, which

he sold out for ready money. Whoever had any silk in their clothes, or wore perukes, or gilt swords, were taxed. An excessive tax was levied on hearths. The people loaded thus with taxes, would have rebelled against any other king; but the most miserable peasant in Sweden knew his master fared much harder and more frugally than himself; so all submitted without a murmur to severities, which their king was always the first to endure.

Public dangers ever occasioned private misfortunes to be forgotten. They expected every moment to have the Moscovites, the Danes, the Prussians, the Saxons and the English, making a descent into Sweden; this fear was so reasonable and strong upon them, that those who had money or valuable goods took care to bury them.

Already had an English fleet shown itself in the Baltic, their orders being entirely unknown and the king of Denmark had the czar's word, that in the spring of 1716 the Moscovites, combined with the Danes, should fall upon Sweden.

How great was the surprize of all Europe,

whose eyes were turned to the fortune of Charles XII. when, instead of defending his country, which was threatened by so many princes, he went into Norway in the month of March with 20,000 men.

Since Hannibal, the world had not yet seen a general, who, when he could not make head against his enemies at home, had gone to attack them in the part of their own dominions. His brother-in-law, the prince of Hesse, attended him in this expedition.

There is no going from Sweden to Norway, but through very dangerous defiles and those passed, at intervals sheets of water left by the sea among the rocks, are so frequent, that bridges must be made, once a day, at least. A very few Danes might have stopped the Swedish army; but so sudden an invasion could not be foreseen. Europe was yet more astonished, that the czar remained quiet amid these events not making a descent on Sweden, as he had before agreed with his allies.

The reason for this inaction was one of the greatest and, at the same time, most difficult

designs, to carry into execution, that human imagination ever formed.

Henry Baron de Gortz, born in Franconia and direct baron of the empire, having done great services to the king of Sweden during the stay of that monarch at Bender, was now become his favourite and his first minister.

No man was ever, at once, so bold and so insinuating ; so full of resources in adversity, so vast in his designs, so active in his resolves ; no project affrighted, no means were wanting. He was prodigal of gifts, promises, oaths, truth and falshood.

From Sweden he went to France, England and Holland, to try, himself, those springs which he intended afterwards to put in motion. He was capable of shaking Europe and had conceived such an idea. He was, in the cabinet, what his master was at the head of an army and thus he assumed an ascendancy over Charles XII. greater than any minister ever had before him.

This king, who at twenty years of age had given only orders to count Piper, now received lessons from baron Gortz and was the more submissive

to that minister, as his misfortunes had placed him under a necessity of taking advice and furthermore, Gortz gave him only such as was suitable to his courage. He found, that of all the princes who were in league against Sweden, Charles's resentment was chiefly against George, elector of Hanover and king of England; because he was the only one whom Charles had never given any cause of complaint and that George had engaged in the quarrel under the pretext of mediation and with the sole view of holding Bremen and Verden, to which he appeared to have no other right than that of having bought them for a trifle of the king of Denmark, to whom they did not belong.

He early discovered too, that the czar was secretly dissatisfied with the allies, who had all prevented his having an establishment in the German empire, where this monarch, become too dangerous, only wanted to gain a footing. Wismar, the only town remaining to the Swedes on the side of Germany, was just surrendered to the Danes and Prussians on the 14th of February 1716. They would not suffer the Moscovite



troops who were in Mecklenbourg to appear even at the siege. Such reiterated mistrust for the space of two years had alienated the czar's inclinations and perhaps prevented the ruin of Sweden. There are many instances of a number of states in alliance being conquered by a single power, and but very few of a great empire conquered by many allies. What their joint strength subdues, their divisions seldom fail to restore.

So long as from the year 1714, the czar could have made a descent on Sweden; but whether he could not agree with the kings of Poland, England, Denmark and Prussia, allies, who had good cause for jealousy, or whether he thought his troops not sufficiently seasoned to attack, upon their own ground, that people, whose very peasants had beaten the choicest of the Danish forces, he always kept aloof from the undertaking.

What had likewise hitherto delayed him, was the want of money. The czar was one of the greatest monarchs in the world, but none of the richest; his revenue at that time did not amount to above twenty-four millions of French livres. He had discovered mines of gold, silver, iron and

copper, but the gain to be drawn from them was yet uncertain and the working ruinous. He had established an extensive commerce; but its beginnings only cherished his hopes. His newly conquered provinces encreased his power and his fame, without adding to his revenue. It was a work of time to bind up the wounds of Livonia, a fertile country, but which had been desolated by a fifteen years war, by fire, sword and plague, almost unpeopled and then a charge upon the conqueror. The fleets he maintained and every day some new enterprize, exhausted his finances. He had been reduced to the wretched expedient of raising the coin, a remedy that never cures the mischief and is particularly prejudicial to a country whose imports are larger than its exports.

It was partly upon these grounds that Gortz had laid the design of a revolution. He was bold enough to propose to the king of Sweden to purchase peace at any price from the emperor of Moscovy, depicting the czar as irritated against the kings of Poland and England and giving him to understand that Peter Alexiowitz and Charles

XII. together, might make the rest of Europe tremble.

There was no making peace with the czar, without ceding a great part of the provinces which lie to the East and North of the Baltic sea; but Gortz made him consider, that in yielding such places as the czar was possessed of already and himself in no condition to retrieve, he might at the same time have the honour of replacing Stanislaus on the throne of Poland, setting the son of James the Second upon that of England and restoring the duke of Holstein to his dominions.

Charles, gratified with these grand ideas, without however building much upon them, gave his minister a *carte blanche*. Gortz left Sweden with full powers, which authorized him in every act without restriction and made him a plenipotentiary to any princes with whom he might think it advisable to treat. His first business was to sound the court of Moscow, by means of one Areskins, a Scotsman, the czar's chief physician, devoted to the pretender's interest, as were most of the Scots, who did not subsist on the favours of the court of London.

This physician set forth, to prince Menzikow, the grandeur and importance of the project, with all the vivacity of a man who was interested in the event. Prince Menzikow relished the overtures and the czar approved them. Instead of a descent in Sweden, as had been agreed between him and his allies, he wintered his troops in Mecklenburg and came there himself on pretence of settling some disputes which had arisen between the duke and the nobles of that country, but in reality to pursue his favourite purpose of gaining a principality in Germany and presuming that he should induce the duke of Mecklenburg to sell him his sovereignty.

The allies were enraged at this proceeding, not caring to have so terrible a neighbour, who, if once he should obtain lands in Germany, might one day get to be elected emperor, to the oppression of all its sovereigns. The greater their resentment, the nearer Gortz's project advanced towards success. He however negotiated with all the confederates, the better to conceal his private intrigues. The czar likewise amused them with hopes. Charles XII. was, all this while, with his brother-

in-law, the prince of Hesse, in Norway, at the head of 20,000 men; the country was only defended by 11,000 Danes, divided into several corps, which were all put to the sword by the king and prince of Hesse.

Charles advanced as far as Christiania, the capital of the kingdom: fortune again began to smile on him in this corner of the world; but the king never took proper care to subsist his troops. A Danish army and fleet were coming to defend Norway. Charles, who was in want of provisions, retired into Sweden, there to wait the issue of his minister's vast designs.

That affair required profound secrecy and immense preparations, two things almost incompatible. But Gortz contrived to fetch, even from the Asiatic seas, a succour, which, however odious it might appear, was not, therefore, the less advantageous for a descent into Scotland and which would at least bring men money and ships into Sweden.

Some time had elapsed since the pirates of all nations, especially of the English, having entered into an association, infested the seas of Europe

and America: Pursued every where, and no quarter being given them, they had retired to the coast of Madagascar, a large island to the east of Africa. They were desperate men and almost all famous for actions which wanted nothing but justice to make them heroic. They were seeking a prince who would receive them under his protection; but the law of nations had shut them out of every harbour in the world.

They no sooner knew that Charles XII. had returned to Sweden, than they had hopes that this prince, so passionately fond of war, forced to carry it on and wanting a fleet and soldiers, would compound with them upon desirable terms; they therefore sent him a deputy, who came to Europe in a Dutch ship, to propose to baron Gortz to admit them into the harbour of Gottenbourg, whither they offered to repair with sixty ships richly laden.

The baron brought the king into the proposition and even sent, the following year, two Swedish gentlemen, Cromstrom and Mendal, to complete the negotiation with the Corsairs at Madagascar.

But a more honourable and more important

help was afterwards found in cardinal Alberoni, an extraordinary genius, who managed the affairs of Spain long enough for his own reputation, though too short a time for the greatness of that state.

He came, with ardour, into the project of setting the son of James the Second upon the throne of England. However, as he had but just entered the ministry and Spain was to be settled before he could pretend to overturn other kingdoms, there was no great likelihood of his being able to put a hand to this great machine for many years; but in less than two years the face of Spain was changed and it was restored to its rank in Europe; induced, as is said, the Turks to fall upon the emperor of Germany and at the same time took measures to depose the duke of Orleans from the regency of France and king George from the crown of Great Britain; so dangerous may one man be, when he has absolute authority in a powerful state and greatness and boldness of mind.

Gortz, having thus spread, in the courts of Moscovy and Spain, the first sparks of the flame

whereon he was meditating, went privately to France and thence to Holland, where he saw the adherents of the pretender.

He obtained more particular information of the strength, the number and disposition of the malcontents in England, what money they could raise and what men they could bring into the field. They asked no more assistance than ten thousand men and were pretty sure of a revolution with the aid of that number of troops.

Count de Gyllemburg, the Swedish ambassador in England, instructed by baron Gortz, had several conferences in London with the principal malcontents ; he gave them great encouragement and promised all they could wish. The pretender's party went so far as to furnish considerable sums, which Gortz received in Holland. He negotiated the purchase of some ships and bought six in Great Britain, with arms of every kind.

He then sent several officers secretly to France, particularly the chevalier de Folard, who having made thirty campaigns in the French service, without improving his fortune, had within a short time offered his services to the king of Swe-



den, less from interested views, than from a desire to serve under a king of that surprising reputation. The chevalier de Folard likewise hoped to recommend to that prince the new discoveries he had made in the art of war, which he had all his life studied as a philosopher and has since published his discoveries to the world, in a commentary on Polybius. Charles XII. was pleased with his notions, and as he had himself made war in a manner entirely new and never suffered himself to be governed in any way by custom, he intended chevalier de Folard to be one of the instruments made use of in the projected descent on Scotland. This gentleman performed in France the secret orders of baron Gortz. A great many French, but more Irish officers, came into this new kind of conspiracy, which was working at the same time in England, France and Moscovy and the branches of which were silently spreading from one end of Europe to the other.

These preparations were still of little moment to baron de Gortz, but it was a great deal for a beginning. The main point, without which there could be no success, was to settle peace between

the czar and Charles and many difficulties were yet in the way. Baron Osterman, minister of state in Moscovy, did not at first give in to Gortz's views; he was as circumspect as Charles's minister was eager. His slow and regular policy was for letting every thing ripen; the impatient genius of the other would reap as soon as he had sown. Osterman was afraid that the emperor, his master, dazzled by the splendour of the undertaking, would grant Sweden too advantageous a peace and delayed, by his tardiness and obstacles, bringing the business to a close.

Very luckily for baron Gortz, the czar himself came to Holland at the beginning of 1717. His design was to go immediately to France; he had not seen that celebrated nation, which for more than a century past has been censured, envied and imitated by all its neighbours; he there wished to satisfy his insatiable curiosity of seeing and learning and at the same time bringing his policy into use.

Gortz saw the emperor twice at the Hague and in these two conferences made more progress than he could have done in six months with ple-

nipotentiaries. Every thing took a favourable turn, his great designs seemed enveloped in impenetrable secrecy and he fondly thought that Europe would only learn them in their execution. All his discourse however at the Hague was upon peace and he openly declared that he should consider the king of England as the pacificator of the north; he even outwardly pressed to have a congress held at Brunswick, where the interests of Sweden and its enemies might be amicably settled.

The first who discovered these intrigues was the duke of Orleans, regent of France; he had spies in every part of Europe. This description of men, whose trade it is to sell the secrets of their friends and who get their living by being informers and not unfrequently by calumnies, were so multiplied in France under his administration, that one half of the nation was become spies upon the other. The duke of Orleans, connected by personal ties with the king of England, discovered to him the whole designs which were working against him.

At the same time, the Hollanders taking um-

brage at Gortz's behaviour, communicated their suspicions to the English minister. Gortz and Gyllemburg were going on briskly, when they were both arrested, one at Deventer, in Guelders and the other in London.

Gyllemburg, as ambassador from Sweden, having violated the law of nations by conspiring against the prince to whom he wassent, there was no scruple made to violate the same right in his person. But it was a subject of great astonishment, that the states general, from unprecedented complaisance to the king of England, threw baron Gortz into prison. Count Welderen was even appointed to interrogate him. This formality was but an additional outrage, which becoming of no avail, only turned to their own confusion. Gortz asked the count of Welderen, whether he knew him? Yes, sir, answered the Dutchman. Well then, said the baron de Gortz, if you do know me, you must also know, that I shall say only what I please. The interrogatory scarcely went further; all the ambassadors, but particularly the marquis de Monteleon, the Spanish minister in England, protested against the injury

done to the persons of Gortz and Gyllemburg. The Dutch could offer nothing in excuse; they had not only infringed a sacred right in seizing the king of Sweden's prime minister, who had never done any thing against them, but they acted directly contrary to the principles of that valuable freedom, which has attracted so many foreigners thither, and has been the foundation of all their greatness.

As for the king of England, he had done no more than was right, in seizing an enemy. He, for his justification, had the letters of baron Gortz and count de Gyllemburg, found among the papers of the latter, printed. The king of Sweden was then in the province of Scania; the printed letters were brought to him, with the news of the seizure of his two ministers. He asked, with a smile, if his letters were printed too? He immediately ordered the English resident, with all his family and domestics, at Stockholm, to be seized. He forbade the Dutch resident his court and kept a close eye upon him. However, he neither avowed nor disavowed baron Gortz. Too haughty to deny an act which he

had approved and too wise to own a project that had proved abortive as soon as it was conceived, he kept a disdainful silence towards England and Holland.

The czar took an entirely different part. As he was not named, but only darkly hinted at in the letters of Gortz and Gyllemburg, he wrote a long letter to the king of Great Britain, full of compliments, upon the conspiracy and assurances of his sincere friendship. King George received his protestations without crediting them and feigned that he suffered himself to be deceived. A plot laid by private men, once discovered, is at an end; but a conspiracy of kings thereby acquires new powers. The czar went to Paris in the month of May the same year, 1717. He did not pass his time merely in seeing the beauties of art and nature; in visiting the academies, the public libraries, the cabinets of the curious and the royal palaces; he made a proposal to the duke of Orleans, regent of France, of a treaty which had it been complied with, might have crowned the greatness of the Moscovites. His design was to connect himself with

the king of Sweden, who would cede to him many great countries; to take wholly from the Danes their power in the Baltic; to weaken the English by a civil war and bring to Moscovy all the commerce of the north. He even had it in contemplation, to set up king Stanislaus against king Augustus; that thus the fire being kindled, on all sides, he might be able to feed or damp it, as he found it his interest. With this view he proposed to the regent of France, to mediate between Sweden and Moscovy, and also to come into an alliance, offensive and defensive, with those crowns and Spain. This treaty, which appeared so natural and essential to those nations and would put the balance of Europe into their hands, was, nevertheless, not accepted by the duke of Orleans. He, at this time, entered into engagements exactly the reverse; he made a league with the emperor of Germany and George, king of England. State reasons had then such influence over all princes, that the czar was declaring against his old ally king Augustus and taking part in the quarrels of Charles his mortal enemy; while France, in favour of

the English and Germans, was going to war with the grandson of Louis the XIVth, after having so long supported him against those very enemies, at such expence of blood and treasure. All that the czar could obtain by indirect means, was, that the regent should interpose his good offices for the enlargement of baron Gortz and count Gyllemburg. He returned to his states at the end of June, having shewn France the rare example of an emperor travelling for instruction; but too many of the French saw nothing of him but the rough unpolished outside, the effects of a bad education, while the legislator, the founder of a new nation and the great man, quite escaped observation.

What he looked for from the duke of Orleans, he soon found in cardinal Alberoni, who was now omnipotent in Spain. Alberoni wished for nothing so much as the re-establishment of the pretender, both as a minister of Spain, which had been so ill treated by the English, as a personal enemy to the duke of Orleans, connected with England against Spain and lastly, as a priest of



that church, for which the pretender's father had so unseasonably lost his crown.

The duke of Ormond, as much loved in England as the duke of Marlborough was admired there, had left his country on king George's accession and having then retired to Madrid, he went with full powers, from the king of Spain and the pretender, to meet the czar upon his way to Mittau in Courland, accompanied by Irnegan, another Englishman of sense and spirit. He demanded the princess Anna Petrowna, the czar's daughter, in marriage for the son of James II. in hopes that this alliance would attach the czar more closely to the interest of that unfortunate prince. This proposal had, for a time, like to have thrown back, instead of advancing, affairs. Baron Gortz, among his schemes, had long intended this lady for the duke of Holstein, who, in fact, afterwards married her. He no sooner heard of the duke of Ormond's proposal, than he grew jealous of and did all he could to defeat it. He was set at liberty in August and count Gyllemburg also, without the king of Sweden hav-

ing condescended so much as to offer any excuse to the king of England, or expressing the slightest dissatisfaction at his minister's conduct.

At the same time, the English resident and all his family, were released at Stockholm, where they had been treated with much greater severity than Gyllemburg had at London.

When Gortz had obtained his liberty, he was an enemy let loose; for besides his other powerful incentives, he now wanted to be revenged. He went post to the czar, with whom his insinuations had more weight than ever. He began, by assuring him that in less than three months, with a single plenipotentiary from Moscovy, he would remove every obstacle to a peace with Sweden; taking up a map, of the czar's own drawing and making a line from Wibourg by the lake Ladoga to the Frozen ocean, he promised to bring his master to relinquish all that laid to the east of that line, together with Carelia, Ingria and Livonia and then he threw out proposals of marriage between his czarish majesty's daughter and the duke of Holstein, giving great hopes that

the duke would readily surrender his country for an equivalent ; that he would thereby become a member of the empire and alternately hinting that the imperial crown must either come to some of his descendants or to himself. Thus he flattered the ambitious views of the czar, took the czarina princess from the Pretender, while it opened a way for him into England and completed all his aims at once.

The czar named the isle of Aland for the conference which his minister of state Osterman, was to have with baron Gortz. The duke of Ormond was entreated to return, not to give too decided offence to England, with which the czar had no mind to break till the time of the invasion. Irnegan alone, the duke of Ormond's confident, was retained at Petersburg ; he was to manage matters and he lodged in the city with such precaution, that he never went out, but at night and never saw any of the czar's ministers, except in the disguise of a peasant or a Tartar.

As soon as the duke of Ormond had left, the czar made a merit to the king of England, of

having sent away the greatest partisan of the pretender and the baron Gortz returned to Sweden with sanguine hopes of success.

He found his master at the head of thirty-five thousand regular troops and the coasts guarded by the militia. The king wanted nothing besides money ; but public credit was gone both at home and abroad. France which had afforded him some subsidies in the latter years of Louis XIV. and the duke of Orleans, who was actuated by entirely opposite views, would give him none. He was promised some from Spain ; but it was not yet in a condition to supply him with much. Baron Gortz, upon this, gave full scope to a project he had already tried before he went into France and Holland ; it was to make copper of equal value with silver : so that a piece of copper of the intrinsic value of a half-penny, might, with the prince's mark, pass for thirty or forty pence ; as sometimes the governors of besieged towns have paid their soldiers and people in leather money, till they could get the regular kind. This fictitious money, made on an emergency and to which good faith alone can give durable credit, is like

notes, whose imaginary value may easily exceed the funds which any state is worth.

Such expedients are of excellent use in a free country and have sometimes been the saving of a republic ; but in a monarchy they are almost certain ruin ; for the people soon losing their confidence, the minister is reduced to break his word, the imaginary money is multiplied to excess ; private individuals withhold their money and the machine destroys itself, with a confusion, frequently accompanied by the greatest misfortunes. This was what happened in the kingdom of Sweden.

Baron Gortz having at first issued his new coin to the public with discretion ; was quickly carried beyond his calculation by the rapidity of a motion which he could no longer restrain. All sorts of goods and provisions having risen excessively in price, he was obliged to augment the number of his copper pieces. The more they were multiplied, the more they were depreciated and Sweden deluged with this fictitious money, exclaimed against baron Gortz. Such was the veneration the people had for Charles, that they could not hate him ; but let the weight of their

aversion fall upon a minister, who being a foreigner and at the head of the finances, was doubly sure of the public hatred.

A tax, that he proposed to lay on the clergy made him completely execrable to the nation. The priests who are too apt to connect their own with God's cause, publicly cried him down for an atheist; because he wanted money from them. The new copper money being stamped with the figures of the heathen gods, they thence took occasion to call those pieces, the gods of baron Gortz.

To the public detestation of him was added the jealousy of ministers, which was implacable in proportion to its impotency. The king's sister and the prince her husband were afraid of him as a man attached by birth to the duke of Holstein and capable, some time or other, of placing the crown of Sweden upon his head. He had never pleased any one in the kingdom except Charles; but this general aversion served only to confirm the friendship of the king, whose opinions were always strengthened by contradiction. He then shewed the baron a confidence little short of sub-

mission, giving him absolute power over the internal government of the kingdom, trusting to him without reserve all that regarded his negotiations with the czar; especially recommending him to press the conferences at the isle of Aland. In fact, as soon as Gortz had completed the financial arrangements which made his presence necessary at Stockholm, he set out to finish, with the czar's minister, the great work he had in hand.

These were the preliminaries of that alliance, which was to have changed the face of Europe, as they were found after Gortz's death among his papers.

The czar was to keep all Livonia and part of Ingria and Carelia, leaving the rest to Sweden. He was to join with Charles XII. in replacing king Stanislaus on the throne of Poland; pledging himself to send thither 80,000 Moscovites to dethrone that very king Augustus, on whose side he had been fighting for ten years. He was to furnish the king of Sweden with the requisite ships to carry 10,000 Swedes to England and 30,000 into Germany. The combined forces of Peter and Charles were to fall upon the king of

England in his Hanoverian dominions, especially those of Bremen and Verden ; the same troops were to restore the duke of Holstein and force the king of Prussia to accede to a treaty whereby he was to part with a portion of what he had taken. Charles, from that time, comported himself as if his victorious armies, reinforced by those of the czar, had already carried the whole plan into execution. He openly insisted on the emperor of Germany fulfilling the treaty of Altranstad. The court of Vienna would scarce vouchsafe an answer to the proposal of a prince from whom they thought they had nothing to fear.

The king of Poland was not so easy ; he saw the storm gathering on every side. The Polish nobility had formed a confederacy against him and he had been obliged ever since his re-establishment, either to be engaged in wars or treaties with his own subjects. The czar, who was now a dangerous mediator, had an hundred galleys near Dantzic and 80,000 men upon the frontiers of Poland. The north was all jealousy and apprehension. Flemming of all men the most distrustful and he of whom the neighbouring pow-



ers had most reason to distrust, was the first who suspected the designs of the czar and king of Sweden in favour of king Stanislaus. He endeavoured to have that prince seized in the dutchy of Deux-Ponts, as James Sobiesky had been in Silesia.

One of those turbulent and enterprising Frenchmen, who wander into foreign countries to try their fortune, had lately brought several of his partizans, French, like himself, into the service of the king of Poland. He imparted, to the minister Flemming, a project, by which he undertook to go with thirty determined French officers, seize Stanislaus in his palace and convey him prisoner to Dresden. The plan was approved; such enterprizes were not unfrequent in those days. Some of those who in Italy are denominated bravos, had done similar acts in the Milanese, during the last war between Germany and France; even more recently, several Frenchmen who had fled to Holland for refuge, had the presumption to penetrate as far as Versailles, with the intention of carrying off the Dauphin and they laid hold of the person of his first equerry,

almost under the windows of the castle of Louis XIV.

The adventurer accordingly disposed his men and relays of horses in order to carry off Stanislaus. The enterprise was discovered the night previous to its execution. Several of his associates saved themselves and some were taken. They could not expect to be treated as prisoners of war, but as banditti. Stanislaus, instead of punishing them, contented himself with reproaching them with an amiable intermixture of kindness; he even gave them money for their return and evinced by this generous proceeding, that his rival Augustus had reason to fear him.

In the mean time Charles was going to make a second attempt at the conquest of Norway, in October 1718. He had, so judiciously, taken all his measures, that he did not doubt he should make himself master of that kingdom in six months. He rather chose to go and conquer rocks, amidst snow and ice, in the asperity of the winter which kills the very animals even in Sweden, where the air is less rigorous, than regain his beautiful provinces in Germany from his enemies

grasp. He hoped his new alliance with the czar would soon put him in a condition to retake all of them ; besides his ambition was gratified with the thought of wresting a kingdom from his victorious enemy.

At the mouth of the river Tistendall, near the bay of Denmark, between the towns of Bahus and Anslo, stands Frederickshall, a place of great strength and importance, which is reckoned to be the key of the kingdom. Charles sat down before it in the month of December. The cold was so extreme, that the soldiers could hardly break the ground, which was so case-hardened with ice, that it was like opening trenches in a rock ; but the Swedes could not shrink from fatigues in which they saw their king take his share and Charles himself never experienced greater. His constitution seasoned by eighteen years unremitted labour, was hardened to that degree, that he would, without his health being affected, sleep in the open field in Norway, in the midst of winter, upon boards or straw, covered only with his cloak. Several of the soldiers fell down dead at their posts with cold and others who were almost frozen to

death durst not complain while they saw their king suffering the same as them. A little before this expedition, hearing of a woman in Scania, named Johns Dotter, who had lived several months upon no other nourishment than water; he, who studied all his life to bear the worst extremes that human nature can support, was resolved to try how long he was able to fast. He neither eat nor drank for five whole days and on the sixth, in the morning, he rode on horseback two leagues and alighted at his brother's-in-law the prince of Hesse, where he ate very heartily, without feeling the least inconvenience, either from his long abstinence, or the great meal he made in consequence.

With this iron body swayed by a soul so firm and courageous, in whatever condition it might be reduced to, there was not any neighbour to whom he was not formidable.

On the 11th of December, St. Andrew's day, he went about nine at night to visit the trenches and not finding the parallel advanced to his mind seemed much displeased. Megret, a French engineer, who conducted the siege, assured him, the place should be taken in eight days. We shall

see, said the king and went on with the engineer to inspect the works. He stopped at a place where the branch of a trench made an angle with the parallel and kneeling upon the inner talus, he leaned his elbows on the parapet, where he staid some time, to look upon the men who were going on with the trenches by starlight.

The least circumstances that relate to the death of such a man as Charles the XIIth are very important ; I therefore take upon me to say, that all the conversation which has been reported by several writers, to have passed between the king and Megret the engineer, is absolutely false. What I know to be the truth of this event is as follows :

The king stood with almost half his body exposed to a battery of cannon levelled exactly at the angle where he was. Two Frenchmen were all who were then near his person ; one was M. Siquier his aid-de-camp, a man of great courage and conduct, who entered his service in Turkey and was particularly attached to the prince of Hesse ; the other was the engineer. The cannon fired upon them with chain shot ; but the king who showed himself most, stood most ex-

posed. A few paces behind was count Swerin, who commanded the trench. Count Posse, captain of the guards and one Kulbert an aid-de-camp, were receiving the king's orders. Siquier and Megret at that moment saw the king of Sweden fall upon the parapet, fetching a deep sigh. They ran to him, but he was already dead ; a half-pound ball had struck him on the right temple and made a hole big enough to contain three fingers. His head laid upon the parapet, the left eye was forced in and the right was quite out of its socket. He was dead the moment he received the wound ; but he however had the power in that instant, to lay his hand, by a natural motion, to the guard of his sword and still kept that posture. At this sight, Megret, an eccentric man of great indifference, only said, the performance is over, let us go to supper. Siquier ran immediately to inform count Swerin. They all agreed to keep the death from the soldiers till the prince of Hesse could be acquainted with it. They covered the corpse with a grey cloak ; Siquier put his hat and wig on the king's head and in this state Charles was carried under the name of cap-

tain Carlsberg through the troops, who saw their dead king pass, little thinking it was him.

The prince instantly gave orders that none should stir out of the camp and that all the passes to Sweden should be guarded, till he had time to take measures for his wife to claim the crown, to the exclusion of the duke of Holstein, who might possibly pretend to it.

Thus fell Charles XII. king of Sweden, at the age of thirty-six years and a half, having known the utmost extremes of the greatest prosperity and most bitter adversity, without being softened by the one, or for a moment shaken by the other. Nearly all his actions, even those of his private life, have far outstripped the bounds of probability. He was perhaps the only man and hitherto the only king, who had ever lived without foibles. He carried all heroic virtues to that excess, that they became as dangerous as the opposite vices. His firmness, degenerating into obstinacy, occasioned his misfortunes in Ukraine and kept him five years in Turkey. His liberality, falling into profusion, ruined Sweden. His courage, carried to rashness, was the occasion of his death. His jus-

tice has sometimes been cruelty and in his latter years, the maintaining his prerogative came very near to tyranny. His great qualities, any one of which had been enough to make another prince immortal, were a misfortune to his country. He never began a quarrel, but he was less prudent than implacable in his resentment. He was the first who ever had the ambition of a conqueror, without wishing to increase his dominions. His desire was to gain kingdoms, that he might give them away. His passion for glory, for war and for revenge, made him too little of a politician, without which we have never seen a conqueror. Before battle and after victory his modesty was pre-eminent and in defeat he was undaunted. Sparing others no more than himself, he made a small account of his own or his subjects lives or labours; an eccentric rather than a great man and fitter to be admired than imitated. His life may be a lesson to kings and teach them, that a peaceful and happy government is more desirable than so much glory.

Charles XII. was tall and nobly shaped, he had a fine forehead, large blue eyes beaming mildness



and a handsome nose ; but the lower part of his face was disagreeable and too often disfigured by a frequent laugh which hardly opened his lips ; he had scarcely any beard or hair ; spoke little and frequently answered only by this habitual laugh. At his table there was always great silence. In his inflexibility of temper he still retained that kind of timidity termed bashfulness and would have been at a loss in conversation, for having given himself so wholly up to labour and to war, he knew but little of society. Before his long leisure in Turkey, he had never read any thing but Cæsar's Commentaries and the history of Alexander ; but he had written some observations upon war and his own campaigns, from 1700 to 1709. He owned this to the chevalier de Folard and said the manuscript was lost at the unfortunate battle of Pultowa.

Some have shewn an inclination to pass this prince off as a good mathematician ; he undoubtedly possessed an acute penetration, but the proofs they bring of his proficiency in mathematics are far from conclusive. He wished to change the method of counting by tens, and proposed in lieu

of it the number sixty-four, because that number contained a cube and square and divided by two was reducible to an unit. This idea merely proved that he preferred what was singular and difficult in all things.

As to religion, though the sentiments of a prince ought not to influence those of other men and the opinion of a monarch, so little informed as Charles, can be of no great weight in such matters; yet it is proper that men's curiosity, which is awake to every thing concerning him, should be satisfied. I have it from the gentleman who gave me most of the materials of this history, that Charles XII. was a true Lutheran till the year 1707; he then saw, at Leipsick, the famous philosopher M. Leibnitz, who was a free speaker and thinker and had instilled the freedom of his opinions into more princes than one. I do not believe the assertion, that Charles XII. imbibed from the conversation of this philosopher, who never had the honour of a quarter of an hour of his company, indifference for Lutheranism; but M. Fabricius who was in habits of intimacy with him for seven years together, during his inactivity

in Turkey, told me that Charles having, during that period, seen more of different religions, did not confine his indifference to one, an idea which La Motraye himself, in his travels, confirms.

The count de Croissy was of the same opinion and has several times told me, that of all his early impressions this prince retained only absolute predestination ; a dogma which was favourable to his courage and could justify his temerity. The czar's sentiments on religion and destiny were similar, but he broached them more frequently ; for he conversed familiarly with his favourites on every subject and had an advantage over Charles in having studied philosophy and possessing the gift of eloquence.

I cannot help taking notice, in this place, of a slander too often spread by credulous or designing people, that when princes die, they are either poisoned or assassinated. A report went abroad in Germany, that M. Siquier was the man who killed the king of Sweden. This brave officer was for a long time miserable in consequence : and one day talking of it to me, he said these very words, I might have killed the king of Sweden,

but I had such a veneration for the hero, that if I had had the inclination, I should not have dared to do it.

I am aware that Siquier himself was the cause of the horrid accusation which is still credited by one part of Sweden. He confessed to me that in a high fever, when at Stockholm, he exclaimed that he killed the king of Sweden and that, in his paroxysm, he had even thrown up the window and had publicly asked pardon for the parricide. Afterwards, during his convalescence, being told what he had said in his illness, he was ready to die with grief. I would not disclose this anecdote while he was alive. I saw him some time before his death and can aver that so far from having put Charles XII. to death, he would rather, a thousand times, have killed himself. Had he been guilty of a crime of this nature, it could only have been to serve some person who would doubtless have given him an ample recompense ; but he died, in France, very poor and even stood in need of his friends' assistance. If these reasons are insufficient, it should

be considered that the ball, by which Charles XII. was struck, could not go into a pistol and that Siquier could not have accomplished the dreadful purpose, but by means of a pistol, concealed under his coat.

Upon the king's death, the siege of Frederickshall was raised ; every thing was changed in a moment. The Swedes, who thought the glory of their prince rather a burthen than a happiness, were for making peace with their enemies as fast as they could and restraining that absolute power which baron Gortz had subjected them to at home. The states readily elected the sister of Charles XII. their queen and obliged her solemnly to renounce all hereditary right to the crown, that she might only hold it by the people's choice. She promised, with repeated oaths, never to attempt the re-establishment of arbitrary power. Afterwards, her love of power giving way to conjugal affection, she yielded the crown to her husband and prevailed on the states to choose him, who ascended the throne upon the same conditions as she had done.

Baron Gortz was seized immediately upon Charles's death and condemned, by the senate of Stockholm, to be beheaded, under the town-gallows; an instance rather of revenge than of justice and an insult to the memory of a king whom Sweden even now admires.

## F I N I S.

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